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SITTING UP AND LEANING UPON HER ELBOW WAS SHE WHOM THE PHYSICIAN HAD, AN HOUR BEFORE, PRONOUNCED DEAD!

For several moments the poor old woman paused; she seemed to be husbanding her strength, and endeavoring to freshen her memory.

But, at the pressure of Frank Hayworth's hand, she rallied:

"Well, young man," she continued, in a voice perceptibly weaker than before, "time passed on. I found lodgings in a low quarter of the city, and managed to earn a scanty livelihood with my needle. Only once after that did I look upon the face of my parents. That occasion was one Saturday afternoon, when sick in body and weary in soul, I crept forth, disguised in an old shawl and bonnet, and, with a small basket of apples, took my way to Broad street. I knew the air would do me good, and I took the apples that the time might not go unprofitably by; I thought I could make a few pennies as I sat there, and watched the gay equipages pass. It was near sunset, when I suddenly saw, coming in from the country, a large open carriage with a liveried coachman and double team. I knew it at a glance, long before I saw my mother and father sitting on the rear seats. I shrunk away, and drew my faded calico sunbonnet over my face more closely. Then, as the carriage was abreast of me, I heard my father bid the coachman stop. I scarcely breathed. In a moment the coachman descended from his seat, and coming up to me, said that the gentleman in the carriage wished some apples. I tremblingly gave him the basket, not daring to look up. My father leisurely purchased some of the fruit, and sent me a piece of silver. I was about to return the necessary change when I heard my mother telling me to keep it all. And as the carriage rolled away I heard my father mutter something about 'poor woman.' I never saw them again. My mother—died—in a month—from that time. I can not tell you the life I led then. I often saw him who had been my ruin; but he never recognized me—never sought me, his victim, to give me alms! But, the trying time of my life was fast approaching. You know what was that time. I determined to make one desperate effort in behalf of that unborn innocent, and you can understand the object of such an effort. I sought out the man I still loved; I dogged his steps whithersoever he went. I gave him no peace. At last, on the condition that I would swear never more to bother him with my presence—that I would not reveal his name as connected with my child—that I would raise no hindrance to any future marriage he might make, he consented to become my lawful husband before God and man."

"So, one dark night I met him by appointment at a stage-office on Second street, and we journeyed away together to a distant village in the interior. And there we were united in the bonds of wedlock by a minister with a witness present. That minister, whom I well knew, and the witness, are dead long ago! But, I have the certificate safe yet! I have, too, the piece of silver my father gave me for the apples; 'tis around my neck. There let it remain. Agnes was born! I took the name I now bear, and have never been ashamed of it. The man who blighted all my hopes of life is likewise dead; he died fifteen years ago, a widower. He married again, not many months after he had deceived me! But, I knew it not. Oh, God! But his wife—one of the belles of Philadelphia—did not live long. A son was left, the wicked monster he is! Nay, Frank Hayworth, start not, and do not interrupt me; I have but little else to say, and but a few moments left me, in which to say it. Agnes is now nearly twenty-four, and she knows not a word of her history. That son is twenty-three. Now, young man, search in that trunk—the old one—yonder by the wall; look in the tray and you will find a paper. Bring it here."

The actor arose to his feet, and approached the trunk, knelt down before it. He was earnest and selfless, and he knew there was no time to be lost. In a moment he returned, bringing a folded yellow sheet of paper.

"Read it, Frank Hayworth," said the poor woman, in a low breath.

The actor opened it, and glanced over it. He started wildly and staggered to his feet.

"My God! His father!" and reeling back, he sunk forward over the bed.

"Ay! his father, Frank Hayworth. Now, listen to the request of a dying woman—of one whose spirit will soon stand in the presence of the Great Judge. Guard that paper well, and when the time comes give it to Agnes, and tell her gently the tale I have told you. My father, her grandfather, is still living; he is a very old man, and can not, in nature, last much longer! He has no living relative of any degree, save Agnes; she is his grandchild, his own flesh and blood. The old man is very wealthy. His property must descend to Agnes; and that certificate of marriage will secure it to her. Now you will know when to give that paper to my child. Will you not protect her from that monster who unnaturally seeks her ruin? Ay! I know you will, and—Hal! I am growing cold! I am—dying! I—I am—dying!—I—I—any—poor—"

A rattle sounded in the throat of the dying woman; a convulsive tremor passed over her frame; then a long, sighing expiration fled out from the collapsed lungs, and the poor woman was dead!

Frank Hayworth placed the yellow, faded sheet carefully in his bosom, and kneeling beside the bed, bent his head reverentially in the presence of death, and prayed silently to Him who robs the grave of its victory.

And then, a soft hand was suddenly laid upon his shoulder.

## CHAPTER XII.

### HAND TO HAND.

WILLIS WILDFERN glared around him like a tiger at bay, as the door of the cellar to the rear was suddenly hauled open, and a half-dozen policemen sprang in.

In an instant all was confusion: Tony suddenly emerged from behind the bar, and uttering a peculiar cry, darted up the secret stairway leading to the house above. The half-drunk wretches lying over the counter, and scattered around upon the bare floor, staggered to their feet and attempted to escape. But the brawny policemen barred their way, and advanced, batons in hand, upon them.

Wildfern leaned over and whispered a word in the negro's ear. Tom did not start; he simply drew himself up, and baring his stalwart arms, said, in a low tone:

"I'll never be taken by dat white trash, cap'n! And the first one dat gets in reach of dis baby's head," shaking his ponderous fist, "will get hurt; dat's all!"

"I'll stand by you, Tom; for we are in a scrape," said Wildfern, in a deep, half-tremulous voice, at the same time thrusting his hand into his bosom, and drawing partly therefrom a long knife.

"Give me fair play, cap'n, and I'll clean out de cellar in five minutes! Let 'em come on!" said the black, his lip now and then twitching nervously, and his red eyes lighting up wickedly.

The policemen were men of nerve and brain; they had made descents upon such houses before, and were prepared for emergencies of any nature soever. They did not hesitate, but continued to advance upon the motley horde, who now, with desperate front, had shrunk away to the further side of the cellar.

Suddenly one of the officers cast his eyes toward two acquaintances.

"Hal! boys!" he exclaimed, triumphantly, "we have bagged de old rat, at last! On to him, my men. Five hundred dollars is the reward for him! Now, my black beauty, we have met at last!"

As the policeman spoke, he clutched his club more firmly, and without awaiting for the others, sprang forward.

But, Wild Tom did not quail; he did not turn to fly, as Willis Wildfern had done. He simply reared himself, until his gigantic stature towered so high, that his bushy head almost touched the ceiling of the cellar. Then throwing himself in an attitude of defiance, he raised his ponderous fist, until the swelling muscles, under the old coat-sleeve, seemed as if they would burst through.

"Stop dar, whar you is, Mr. Brass-butons! or you'll git a cold dat's past curing! Stand back, I say, white man! I ain't what people thinks me. I never harmed you, and you shan't put your hands on me! Stand back, or I'll smash your head into a jelly! and I can do it!"

The policeman—himself a very Hercules in mold, and a lion in courage—hesitated for a moment; but it was not through fear.

"Give up, you black villain, at once!" he said. "Be a little wise, my pretty fellow; for I shall not leave this cellar until I have clutched you with the bracelets!" and he advanced again.

The negro did not move an inch. His face was now doubly dark with passion, and his bloodshot eyes glared with a glittering, snake-like glare.

"Den come on and take me! When dem irons is on my wrists, somebody 'll be dead—dat's all! Now come along; I'm waiting. And I think dat I'll clean out dis room quick enough to suit you!"

The words were scarcely out of the man's mouth, when at a bound, the stalwart policeman, without waiting longer, bowed his head and dashed forward.

The shock was fearful; for it was man to man—muscle to muscle—brawn to brawn!

The movement of the officer was like lightning; for in the twinkling of an eye, his heavy grip was fast upon the negro's throat, and his whole weight was, at the same time, pressing him back.

The others held off; no one interfered. But all from mere interest and excitement, watched the contest, which had been inaugurated between these two giants.

Slowly the policeman followed up his advantage—the negro giving back doggedly, inch by inch, his own heavy hand clutching the officer by the shoulder. But, as yet, he had made no decided effort, simply opposing his weight to the other.

Then, all at once, the policeman thrust his hand in his overcoat pocket for the manacles, which he carried with him. The pieces of steel jingled as they struck against each other.

In the twinkling of an eye, the negro paused in his retreat, and by one powerful effort of strength, wrenched the other's grasp from his throat, and instantly gripped the officer by the neck with his left hand. Then the brawny right arm was drawn back, the weighty fist swung over the black bushy head; and then, with a whiz, that first shot out, straight from the shoulder, through the air.

A dull, sickening thud sounded on the close, still air; and then another. Releasing his hold, the negro grasped the policeman with both hands around the waist, and by a wondrous display of strength, raised him clear from the floor, and flung him, as a bolt from a catapult, into the little band of his companions.

Without waiting to see the effect of this bold movement, the negro raised a wild shout of triumph, and bidding his own backers on, dashed forward to the fight. The half-drunk creatures, raised to a high pitch of excitement, and now frenzied with anger, followed.

Willis Wildfern could not keep back; he

## \$50,000 Reward; OR, THE ROMANCE OF A RUBY RING. A PHILADELPHIA HISTORY AND MYSTERY.

BY WM. MASON TURNER, M. D.,

Author of "The Masked Miner," "Under Bail," "Silver Heels," etc., etc.

### CHAPTER XI.

#### A REVELATION.

WELL might Frank Hayworth shrink and cower with affright. The sight which met his gaze was one fitted to strike terror to his soul.

On the bed, sitting up and leaning upon her elbow—her eyes staring wildly around her—her shrunken, angular, death-struck face showing like a specter's in the pale light—her mouth contorted into a half-grimace—was the widow Hope! She whom the physician, an hour before, had pronounced dead!

There she sat, and her dim eyes, now glaring with a fixed stare, were fastened upon the young man. But, she did not speak.

Slowly Frank Hayworth recovered his scattered senses; then he drew near the bedside of the woman, whom all had thought was already wandering in spirit through the misty shadow-land.

He paused; but the woman made a gesture for him to draw nearer. He obeyed. Then she pointed feebly to a vial on the table by the bedside. The young man brought it to her lips, and at another sign placed it to her lips.

The old woman drank greedily, half-emptying the vial; then sunk back slowly upon the pillow. She lay perfectly still with her eyes shut.

Frank Hayworth, scarcely knowing what to do, looked wonderingly on. He seemed to be in a dream. But, all at once bestirring himself, he turned from the bed, and was about to hurry into the room where Agnes was sleeping.

The old woman, however, unclosed her eyes.

"Stop, Frank Hayworth!" she said, in a faint, hollow voice. "Do not awaken Agnes; let the poor girl sleep on. Come hither, young man. My sands are fast running away; the potent draught has given me artificial life. Come, sit near me—I will tell you a tale, and intrust you with a commission. Hurry, for time is ebbing; and with me, whose feet are even now on the boundaries of another world, time is every thing. How chilly I am! The draught! Quick, Frank, the draught!"

Again the actor placed the vial to the lips of the dying woman; again she clutched it and drank eagerly of the life-sustaining liquid.

Once more the effect was apparent; for the old woman drew a long breath, and reaching out, grasped the young man with her cold, almost pulseless hand, and drew him down to a seat beside the bed.

"Had I not better call Agnes, Mrs. Hope? She sleeps just there, and—"

"No, Frank Hayworth, what I have to say must be briefly told, for life is going fast. Agnes, too, would be shocked, for she thinks I am already dead, and with her the worst is over. Let her sleep on. Now, listen, Frank, and, as I know you to be a man of honor and truth, promise me, as far as you are able, to see that my dying wishes are observed."

She paused, and for a moment breathed heavily. Closing her eyes, she remained perfectly quiet for several minutes.

The young man took her gently by her thin hand—so cold, yet so damp and so grave-like! He spoke not a word, but waited for the poor woman to say what was upon her mind.

Frank Hayworth, though his brain fairly reeled, and the pulses of his heart were thrilling wildly through his system, still controlled himself—still held the cold hand in his, and awaited the words to come forth from the pale, bloodless lips.

Suddenly a tremor passed over the woman's frame. She opened her eyes, and then once more reached out for the vial. Again it was placed to her lips. This time she drained it to the bottom, and casting it empty, aside, she said, in a voice preternaturally strong:

"There! 'Tis gone! every drop. And now I must speak. Listen, Frank Hayworth, and listen well; for 'tis my last chance. Do not interrupt me by word or sign; if I fail now, the opportunity will be gone forever, and the sad secret of my bosom will die with me. I was not born, young man, in the poverty which you now see around me; far from it! I was the spoiled, pampered child of fortune; I had every thing with which to gratify the wishes of my heart. An elegant home, fond parents, wealth in abundance, gay society—I had all! And I had something else, young man! Something more fatal, unless rightly appreciated, than the poison of asps! I had beauty, wondrous, fascinating, captivating beauty. Ah, Frank Hayworth, no wonder you start and gaze at me—an old, dying woman, with hollow eyes and a thin, pinched face! But, forty years ago, I was beautiful! Oh, that the virgin splendor with which, alas, I was endowed, had been denied me!"

The old woman paused; her breath was coming and going rapidly; and, strange to say, an unnatural fire gleamed in her eyes, and a small, round, red spot glowed like a living coal upon each wan, faded cheek.

Frank Hayworth said not a word, but, by a single pressure of the hand, he let the poor old creature know that he was heeding well her words.

"I was rich, well-educated and handsome. It can not be wondered, then, that suitors flocked around me; they came by scores. But, one by one, I turned them off. At length, however, there came one to whom my young heart went out. He was a handsome man, almost God-like in his lofty deportment. He was well-to-do, and possessed a broad, liberal mind, cultivated to the highest degree. But, with all this, he had an oily, deceitful tongue! That tongue and my beauty—for he loved me for my beauty—destroyed me! 'Tis an old tale, and one soon told! I loved him too well, and not with wisdom."

"I ran away one wild night, and was secretly married to him! Married? Ah, yes! We returned; and on our way home I fancied I saw a shade of regret and alarm in my husband's manner. And then a sudden,

black suspicion flashed through my mind! But I chased it away. I went to my father—explaining my absence the best way I could. I went hither, for my husband said that, for a time, he wished our marriage kept secret! Oh! fool that I was! And yet, how I loved that man!"

"Time passed on, and then, another hideous trouble came upon me. You know to what I refer. Well, this could be concealed from my mother and father. They unbraided me; and then my father, on his knees, besought me to tell him the man who had dishonored him. I held my place, for I had promised him to say nothing of our marriage; and I knew a day would come when I could prove my purity and innocence. Then my father swore a fierce oath, and bade me in sternest language to tell him the name of my lover."

"Still, I answered not a word; I could not betray the man I loved, though death was staring me in the face! Then, with a storm in his bosom, and a fierce anathema on his lips, my father clutched me by the arm, and leading me from the parental roof, hurled me out into the bleak street! Oh, God! the memory of that dark, wild night haunts me still! But, I was true to the man I loved—true to my husband, alas!"

"I wandered forth into the deserted streets, which, that night, were like it is to-night, swept by driving gusts. I roamed the unfrequented by-ways of this great city all that night; and when the dawn broke, I sat down upon the steps of a lordly mansion. I knew not where I was. As I sat there, the door suddenly opened, and who should come forth but the man I loved! He was arrayed for a gunning expedition. I sprang to my feet, and clung around him. In a few words I told him my tale, and begged him to claim me as his wife—to remove the stigma from my name; but, instead of sympathizing with me, he gazed at me sternly, and then, with a mocking laugh, told me that I had been 'very imprudent.' But, I still clung to him; I would not thus let him go. A dark frown came over his face; for, at that moment, an open buggy drove up. In it sat a young man. And then, before I knew it, this man—this false lover of mine—flung me rudely aside, and bounding down the steps, sprang into the vehicle and dashed off."

"Then, I knew that I had been deceived—that the marriage was in all probability a sham—a villainous ruse. I slowly arose and tottered away—anywhere, I cared not—so that I was moving! Suddenly, my father's aristocratic mansion towered before me. Instinctively I paused and turned toward the old familiar home; my heart yearned for it. In a moment, despite the early hour, I was upon the steps, and had rung the bell with a nervous hand. The door was soon opened, and my father, stern, indignant and repelling, stood there. He gave me one glance of withering scorn, and then hurled the door to. I distinctly heard the lock turn in the bolt, and my father's heavy steps receding down the hall. I was disowned! Oh, God! stand by me now!"



was hurried along with the surging combatants, and in a moment was in the midst of the fray.

An instant later and the contending parties came together.

The policemen were not dismayed. Hitherto they had not resorted to fire-arms; but now as the infuriated fiends, headed by the gigantic black, bore down upon them, a pistol-barrel gleamed in the hands of one of them.

The lights were suddenly extinguished, and a fearful scene was inaugurated. Then the sharp ring of a pistol rung in the low room—then the sickening thud of falling blows, and the clicking clash of knives in contact.

The fight was desperate, but the odds were fearful. Fighting gallantly to the last, the policemen were driven backward, and then up-stairs. Then they hastily retreated, defeated, but not dismayed, through the dark alley into the street.

When they returned at dawn, with reinforcements, the old house was deserted, the furniture had disappeared, as if by magic, and on the floor of the cellar, stark in death—his face battered out of shape—a venomous knife-thrust in his throat, lay the gallant policeman.

#### CHAPTER XXII. A HEART TALK.

FRANK HAYWORTH, as he felt that touch upon his shoulder, slowly raised his head and glanced behind him. Although he suspected who it was, he could not help starting violently, as his gaze fell upon the pale, haggard face of Agnes Hope.

"I heard you talking, Frank, and I could not stay away," said the girl, in a low, sweet voice, "I have come to share with you your vigils."

As she spoke she sat down in a chair near him, her eyes all the time bent with a warm, confiding gleam, upon his face.

The young man arose slowly to his feet; he was trembling in every limb. Then his gaze fell scrutinizingly upon the girl's wan, pallid face. His eyes rested there for a moment. But as a look of satisfaction passed over his features, he said:

"Agnes, you did not hear the words I used?" and he watched her eagerly for the answer.

The girl did not hesitate, but answered promptly:

"No, Frank; but I thought that—that you were praying for the repose of my dead mother's soul," and she bowed her head as unbidden tears forced themselves through the vein-marked lids, and fell on the coarse coverlid of the bed.

Frank Hayworth did not turn his head away to conceal the emotion which showed in his own face; but, taking the girl's hand gently in his, he said, in a low tone:

"I was praying, Agnes."

He spoke the truth; but not all.

The young man rejoiced in his heart that Agnes had not heard the dark tale, which had fallen from the lips of her mother, whom the poor girl thought long since dead.

There was a silence for several moments; the actor still holding in his, the thin, cold hand of the girl. And Agnes did not attempt to withdraw that hand; for despite the presence of ghastly death—despite the stark, stiffening form of her dead mother lying before her, so quiet—so awful—the girl was happy, and a joyous sensation was tingling through her system.

Her hand was touching Frank Hayworth's! And down deep in her sorely-tried virgin's bosom, Agnes Hope loved the actor with a maiden's unsullied, yearning devotion.

Her hand gently returned the pressure of the man's stalwart grasp.

Frank Hayworth started as he felt the warming, tightening clasp of that soft hand. His face crimsoned, a violent twitching wrinkled his forehead, and he half-dropped the poor supplicating hand.

The girl instantly withdrew her fingers from his grasp, and shrank timorously away.

But, no word was spoken.

The actor keenly felt his position, and he almost cursed the train of unlucky circumstances which had thus placed him. He knew that Agnes Hope loved him—loved him—not wantonly, oh, God, no! but trustingly, it may be blindly—yet with her whole heart.

He dared not forget his old-time vows—he dared not encourage that girl's confiding affection. He could not forget another! At that moment, in mental vision, he plainly saw the warm, beauteous face of Sadie Sayton, shining with a dead-white lustre, as she stood by his side that dark night on the wharf, overhanging the rushing river-torrent.

No! no! He must not think of Agnes Hope!

And yet, his brain reeled suddenly, as he recalled the dark tale, told him this very night, by her who had been mother to the beautiful, pale-faced, warm-hearted girl, who now sat before him in that lonely death-chamber.

Agnes Hope was of good family, and was heiress to one of the most princely fortunes in the city!

Frank Hayworth paused as this reflection came over him like an avalanche.

And he had heard the tale—and he had heard the solemn dying words—and he held in his possession the faded sheet, which in

certain, and easily-comprehended, circumstances, would secure to Agnes Hope, the orphan—the poverty-stricken daughter of misery—vast piles of money and long lists of property—if the pealing words of a woman, over whom flapped the black wings of death, were true!

And he, Frank Hayworth, the actor—the exile—was poor!

Again the man's brain reeled as the tempter came in such luminous shape.

But, though the struggle was severe, it was scarcely more than momentary.

Frank Hayworth was true to Agnes Hope—was faithful to the memory of Sadie Sayton, and did not forget himself!

As the decision was reached, a quiet, peaceful, holy calm pervaded his soul, and a grateful incense burned on the altar of his heart.

And, when the smoke of that incense cleared away, the resplendent image of Sadie Sayton sat enthroned in his bosom, an undisputed queen.

Yet, no word was spoken, and no sound broke the silence of the quiet death-chamber, save the sighings of the winter wind, waiving around the rickety dwelling, and forcing themselves through the creaking sash-joints.

But, at length, the actor looked up, and, in a voice barely audible, said:

"You had better retire, Agnes, to the other room; you need sleep. You have undergone much, and you must take good care of yourself," and he gazed kindly at her.

"And you, Frank; you, too, need repose. Go within yourself, and sleep. I will sit up, in your place. I am not afraid of her, dead, who, when living, loved me so tenderly. Alas! that I should live to see such an hour!"

"Be comforted; be of good cheer, Agnes. You have friends yet. But, indeed, you had better go now; you will need strength for the day which is rapidly coming."

He spoke very earnestly.

The girl shook her head sadly, but decidedly, as she replied:

"No, Frank; I have already slept an hour. I can not close my eyes again tonight; and if you will not go and lie down yourself, I will sit up and watch with you."

The young man could say nothing more; he simply bowed his head in acquiescence. And there they sat, silent and thinking.

The coarse coverlet was drawn over the shrunken form on the bed, shutting out to a certain extent the dread presence. The seconds and minutes flew by; then an hour.

Agnes sat like a statue, staring before her, her dark eyes fixed—her thin, white hands crossed upon her lap—motionless.

Frank Hayworth's head leaned to one side—then on his breast. Then his hands sunk gradually down; and wearied and at last worn out, a deep slumber crept over the young man, and he slept.

Hideous dreams, ghostly phantoms filled his brain, and passed in long, spectral array before him. Now and then he started, and a half-smile escaped him. But he still slept on.

How long he slumbered, he knew not; but he was suddenly awakened by a soft, hot hand, laid gently upon his brow.

That hand was smoothing back the dark, clustering hair, which had fallen over the actor's brow.

The young man started; in a moment he was awake. He glanced around him, and instantly took in his position. But his face first crimsoned, then paled as his eyes fell on Agnes Hope, who had drawn her chair close to his.

There was no mistaking the import of the luster burning in the girl's eyes; there was no mistaking the meaning—told so plainly—in the quivering lip, and the heaving bosom.

And the girl did not shrink away.

"Well, Agnes?" said the young man, almost before he knew what he was saying.

Agnes did not reply; but her waxen cheeks flushed faintly, and she covered her face with her hands, and wept.

"What is it, Agnes?" asked the young man, in a low, trembling voice.

The girl still did not answer; but she slowly raised her tear-bedewed face, and looked at him straight and unflinchingly.

Frank Hayworth almost shuddered at what he seemed to dread as a horrid revelation; but he did not speak.

"God forgive me, Frank," began Agnes, in a voice just above a whisper; "and you, too, Frank, forgive me if what I say to you, in this lonely chamber, tenanted by death, is wrong and unmaidenly. I have struggled against the mad impulse prompting me to speak! I have prayed against it; but in vain! I must speak, or I would die! And, Frank, I know you too well—your generous heart—your high regard for truth, your noble scorn for all that is false and low! I know that, come what may, I can trust to your honor, Frank. Nay, nay, Frank, do not interrupt me, for I tell you, I must unburden my heart to you, or I would die! Frank, and her voice was more subdued than ever, and her head was slightly bowed, "we have not, it is true, known each other for years; but we have been together now long enough for us to be acquainted with the faults and follies, or the good traits, of one another. I am, Frank, what you see me—a poor outcast, a beggar, a puppet of fortune—a wail blown hither and thrown thither by every varying wind. But I feel, Frank—for something

within me says so, in a voice louder than trumpets—that I was born for better things! I feel myself superior to the situation—far above the circumstances in which you see me. Frank, we have been drawn very closely together of late; we have stood side by side; we have touched hands! I have felt your eyes glow warm upon me, and—and—oh, God! my heart has gone out to you! For heaven's sake, Frank, speak not! Let me say on. I am all alone now in the world—no one to whom to look—no one with whom to advise, and, oh, God! Frank, I can not be separated from you—for—I love you!" and she bowed her head upon her thin hands, through the slender fingers of which the tears forced their way, and dropped upon the bare floor.

Suddenly she looked up, and, in a wild, enthusiastic tone, continued:

"We are both young, Frank; you have already won your way into the world's favor, and a bright and successful career is before you. I, too, can be successful; I feel it! Oh, Frank, with my hand in yours, I could walk peacefully over the broad road of life; for that road would be covered with roses and beauteous wild flowers; and the bending skies would smile upon us, and a perennial reign of unalloyed bliss would be ours! Oh, darling, say that your heart beats in unison with mine—say that we can link hands, hearts and fortunes together! Say, darling, that down in your pure and noble heart, you love me!" and in an irrestrainable moment, the poor girl arose to her feet, and flung her arms around the strong man's neck.

We can not describe the emotions which at that time raged in Frank Hayworth's bosom; nor shall we attempt to do so.

A terrible shudder passed over his frame; then his bosom was filled with thickening clouds, and then a wild storm swept like wind through his thinking being; then, oh God! the enthroned image of Sadie Sayton grew dim! It tottered, reeled and—

NO, IT DID NOT FALL!

Frank Hayworth's whole manhood came to his relief; he was himself—the noble, unspotted gentleman—again; his buckler was untarnished—his high, God-like honor unstained!

Slowly, gently, he unlocked the thin arms clasped around his neck—tenderly he placed the maiden in a chair; and then taking her hand in his, he said, in a voice deadened with emotion, yet distinct withal, in that quiet chamber of death:

"This can not be, Agnes! for God, 'who doeth all things well,' has pronounced against it. Listen, listen, poor Agnes! Listen to a tale I will tell you, and then judge me."

Closer he drew his chair to hers—more tightly he clasped the trembling hand in his. And then Frank Hayworth told Agnes Hope the tale.

Hours passed; and then the heart-story was finished.

Then the two—the man and the maiden—knelt humbly by the bedside, on which reigned solemn death.

They arose to their feet. One glance between them, and the man leaned down, and imprinting a kiss upon the smooth brow of the maiden, said, in a sweet voice, full of rich music:

"I greet thee, my sister!"

And Agnes murmured:

"And I, thee, my brother! God has so willed it!"

And then the rosy dawn glinted its purple light through the broken panes, and shone cheerily in the death-chamber.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 25.)

## The Scarlet Hand:

OR,  
The Orphan Heiress of Fifth Avenue.

A STORY OF NEW YORK HEARTS AND HOMES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,  
AUTHOR OF "THE ACE OF SPADES," ETC.

### CHAPTER XXVI.

HOW CRISIE WAS PAID.

It was on the day following the night that Duke the Slasher and his gang had made their attack on the actor and his friends, that Mordaunt sat by the bedside of Crissie.

Although she was not dangerously hurt, yet the doctor had recommended perfect quiet for a few days.

It was a hard task for Crissie to lie still, brisk, bustling little woman that she was. Always active, always at work, she could not have possibly remained quiet, had not the actor sat by the bedside, caring for her as though she had been a sick child instead of a woman, and "petting" her in a way that Crissie Moore never before had known in all her life.

There was a subtle magnetism about the actor; a something in the glance of his dark eye, an electric thrill in the touch of his cold, white hand, when carelessly he passed it across her forehead, that Crissie wondered at, and which seemed to draw her closer and closer to him, even despite herself. Yet she did not struggle against the feeling, but yielded to it. At times she felt as if she was in a trance—a delirium that she could not account for. The whole room seemed to swim around her; she could see naught but the great dark eyes of the man who sat so patiently by her bedside. Those eyes, so soft in their liquid brightness, so glorious in their rays of fire.

And often, as Crissie looked into the pale, careworn face of the actor, noted the dark lines beneath the eyes; the slight hollow in the cheeks; the handsome, but irresolute mouth that concealed the white teeth, so perfect in their beauty; the broad, pale forehead that told of genius and of mental power, she wondered if he was so strangely fascinating now, when only a wreck of what he once must have been, how he had looked when in his prime of youth before the demon, dissipation, had dragged him down.

Mordaunt had been either reading or reciting from memory—which was richly stored with many a strange old ballad—to Crissie, all the morning.

The girl lay with eyes half closed and listened with delight, while Mordaunt's musical voice gave double point to some charming love story, like Whittier's "Amy Wentworth," or rung out, clear as the clarion's note, as he told, "how they held the bridge in the brave days of old."

Crissie, whose life had been one long, desperate struggle with poverty, if it had never known what it was to be pitied and caressed, so it had been barren as a sand-reach of all the sweet influences which intellectual pleasures bring.

It was a delightful sensation. She liked it. The novelty pleased her. To be petted, too, by a man like Mordaunt, whose touch was as gentle as that of a woman's, and whom she already looked up to, as being better than the rest of mankind, despite his faults, was blissful indeed.

Women are apt to make heroes of the men they love; it is their nature, and nature will have its way in spite of all the "rights" in the world.

Crissie Moore was in love with Mordaunt, though she did not know it herself. She knew that she liked him. That liking prompted her to throw herself beneath the blow of the rough to save him. But, she had never questioned her feelings. She did not know now what it was that made it seem so pleasant to have the actor sit by her bedside. She had not tried to discover. In fact, she had never thought of analyzing her happiness. Enough for her—happy little woman—that she was happy. She did not question why.

"Ain't you tired of hearing me read, Crissie?" Mordaunt said, laying down the book.

"Oh, no," she answered, quickly, her eyes shining as bright as twin stars; "I am very fond of hearing any one read. Besides, you read books that I never heard of before, and they are so real interesting." The actor had just finished "Romeo and Juliet."

"But doesn't it tire you to read to me?"

"Why, no, Cris," and the white hand of the actor pushed back the silken, odd-colored hair from the girl's low forehead in a caressing way. "You forget that it is my business to use my voice constantly. Once I had a voice that could stand any amount of toil. I could get through a part like Macbeth in Shakespeare's tragedy, where there is a terrible strain upon the voice, and yet it would be as fresh at the end of the play as at the beginning."

"And is it not so now?" Crissie asked. She had captured the hand upon her temples and was pressing it softly between her own little palms.

"No," answered Mordaunt, a touch of sadness in his tones that went straight to Crissie's heart. "I have to be very careful of my voice; spare it all I can. The voice, you know, is the great charm of the actor, or, in fact, of any public speaker."

Crissie in her heart thought that there wasn't such another voice as Mordaunt's in all the world.

"Don't you find it dull sitting here with poor little me?" Crissie asked, looking shyly into his face with her bright blue eyes.

"Dull with you, Cris!" said Mordaunt, reproachfully. "Why, how can you ask that, you dear little woman? Didn't you risk your life last night to save mine. Oh, Cris, I wish I had met you before—say five years ago. I was a different man then to what I am now. Drink and dissipation had not laid their hands upon me. I was not then a mere wreck of a man."

"Why, Edmund," she said, softly, carrying his thin white hand to her lips and kissing it, playfully, "you must not speak like that. There are a great many in the world far worse off than you. Beside, you have changed now. Since you have been with us, you have been steady, and you can hardly imagine how you have changed for the better in that short time. Why, last night, in the theater, two gentlemen who sat in front of me were speaking of you, and one said to the other, 'Mordaunt is looking about as well as he used to; and the other replied, 'yes.' They had evidently known you in the past, and they did not notice any great change."

"That was on the stage," replied the actor. The footlights make a great difference in one's appearance. They make the old look young, and the ugly look handsome. But, as I was saying, Cris, if I had known a nice little woman—like you—years ago, that nice little woman might have altered the course of my life considerably, and it would have been for the better too, Cris."

"Do you think so?" she said, and she wished in all her heart that she had known Mordaunt years before. And the thought came into her mind, that, perhaps, if such had been the case, she would have been happier too.

"Yes, I do indeed," he answered. "By the way, Cris, how am I going to pay you for saving my life; for you did save it. If that fellow's blow had fallen on my head instead of on your arm, I should not have been sitting here to-day by your side."

"I don't know," Crissie said, shyly. And the white lids and golden lashes came down over the blue eyes. But, in the day-dream of the girl, there came a thought of how she would like to be paid for the life that she had saved; but she would not have spoken that thought for worlds. It seemed so improbable—so impossible that the wish could be fulfilled.

"But, Cris, I must pay you in some way," Mordaunt said, earnestly; "perhaps my life isn't worth much, being half wasted already; but it still is very dear to me. And now I think of it, it must be dear to some one else, only in a different way. I want to preserve it, and the other wants to destroy it."

"Why, what do you mean?" and Crissie's eyes opened wide.

"My life has been attempted twice within the last two weeks," Mordaunt answered.

"Your life attempted?"

"Yes, twice some one has tried to murder me. The first time they tried poison, but my system was so saturated with alcohol that the poison was in some measure counteracted; so that plan failed. That was the time that I became acquainted with your brother. The second time was last night. Your brother thought that the attack was the result of a mistake; that is, that the roughs mistook us for somebody else. I did not think so. I am convinced that it was another blow aimed at my life. The fellows were evidently in waiting for me. Pony and you being with me alone defeated the plan."

"But why should any one desire your death, Edmund?" asked Crissie, in wonder.

"I hardly know myself," replied Mordaunt, thoughtfully. "But I can guess the reason. There was a murder committed in Baxter street only a little while ago, and the murderer escaped unknown. Through a strange combination of circumstances, the murderer was, I think, revealed to me. He at the same time, by some means, guessed that I knew his fearful secret; hence he has attempted to take my life, and thus, by a second crime, conceal the first."

"But why do you not denounce this man to the police?" was Crissie's natural question.

"Because I haven't proof enough yet, but I am collecting it, slowly, link by link; soon I hope to complete the chain, and then my turn will come."

"But you must be careful, or he may succeed in killing you," said Crissie, looking in the actor's face, anxiously.

"I shall take care of myself hereafter," Mordaunt said, significantly. "I shall go armed in the future, and probably in disguise. Thanks to my art of acting, I can do that easy enough. But, Crissie," and the actor bent over the bed and looked full in the upturned face of the young girl, "you haven't told me yet, how I can pay you for saving my life."

"I don't want any pay," and Crissie, closing her eyes, evaded the gaze of Mordaunt.

"I am not going to be satisfied with that," said the actor, softly, and touching the girl's white forehead with his lips—a pure and holy kiss, that thrilled Crissie's heart with joy. "Oh, Cris," he said, looking with eyes full of love into the little face of the girl, "if I had only known you five years ago, when I held up my head proudly in the world. If this had happened then, I should have asked you to take in payment for the service, myself—to take the life that you had saved and make it happy, forever more."

"Oh! how the low, sweet words filled Crissie's soul with joy. She could hardly believe her hearing."

"Edmund," she said, unclosing her eyes a little and looking up into Mordaunt's face.

"But now," he continued, "I will not ask you to share the, perhaps, wretched lot of a man so broken in fortune as I am. But, Crissie, I can be a brother to you—a kind and loving brother."

For a moment Crissie looked Mordaunt in the face.

"I don't want a brother," she said, and then she turned her face away from him and looked at the wall.

The simple sentence—the flushed, griefed face of the girl, told Mordaunt the truth at once. He passed his arm gently under the little head and turned the face again to him.

"Crissie, will you be my dear little wife?"

"Yes," she answered, promptly, her face beaming with joy, and she held up her lips to seal the bargain.

Crissie never had such a kiss before.

### CHAPTER XXVII. A LAWYER'S TRICK.

FOR three days Blanche had been in her prison, for such she rightly considered it. And during the three days she had seen no one except Doctor Fondell and a woman of middle age, who attended to her rooms.

Blanche's mind had been contriving some plan to escape from her prison. But even if she were free, where could she go? Not back to the Strathroy mansion, for it

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was evident that Allyne Strathroy knew of her imprisonment, as her trunks containing her clothes had all been sent to her. It was plain, then, that her present abode was to be her home for some time.

Then she remembered her friend, Margaret Osmond; she could go to her if she could only escape from the asylum in which she was imprisoned. But that was easier to think of than to carry into execution.

Then a bright thought came into her mind. Margaret's brother, Leonard, was a lawyer. If she could only contrive in some way to let Margaret know where she was imprisoned, he would surely think of some way to free her.

So Blanche sat down and wrote a long letter. Writing materials had not been denied her. In her letter she gave a full description of all that had occurred.

Fortunately Blanche had remembered Margaret's address.

Then Blanche's next thought was, how could she send the letter?

She felt that it would be useless to attempt to bribe the woman that waited upon her.

While puzzling her brains over this difficult question, Blanche chanced to look out of the window. In the garden, at work, she saw a man, evidently a common day-laborer. He was an Irishman, so she judged from his looks.

"If I can only attract his attention, perhaps he will carry my letter," Blanche said, in joy.

The windows of her room were so arranged that they only opened a little way at the bottom; a space of some six inches. Evidently the design was to prevent the inmate of the room from attempting to escape that way.

Blanche wrote upon the letter: "Deliver this and keep the money. Don't show it to any one." Then she tied a five dollar bill to the envelope and raised the window gently, without making any noise.

The man was busy at work, digging in the garden, and occasionally amusing himself with singing:

"An' she wor fair, wid coal-black hair,  
That gurl of Mullinagreena,"

came gently on the air to Blanche's ears as she opened the window.

Carefully she endeavored to attract the laborer's attention. At last she succeeded. The man paused in his work and looked at the window.

Blanche placed her fingers upon her lips, as if to entreat caution, then threw the letter carefully out of the window.

"Phat the devil's that now, anyway," muttered the workman, as he saw the letter float through the air to the earth. "It is a letter, an' the lady is afraid of bein' seen by some blaggard. Begorra, I'll see phat it is."

With his spade on his shoulder, carelessly, but still keeping a watchful eye around to see that he was not observed, the Irishman walked over and picked up the letter. Fortunately for Blanche's scheme he could read.

"Deliver this an' kape the money! Oh! I'll do that!" and he pocketed the five dollars instantly. "Don't show it to any wan!" Of course I won't. I'd be a dirty blaggard for to do that, after takin' the money. I'll tend it for ye, ma'am; more power to ye!" he added, nodding to Blanche in the window and putting the letter in his pocket.

Blanche could not hear his words, but she guessed the meaning of his speech.

"He will deliver it and I shall be rescued from this horrid place!" she cried in joy.

The man left off work at twelve, and faithful to his trust hurried down-town with the letter. He found the Osmonds at home and delivered the missive; at the same time telling the young man how the lady had dropped it to him from the window.

Margaret, on reading the letter, was astonished, and handed it immediately to her brother. He in turn perused it.

After a moment's thought, he put a few questions to the Irishman, regarding the exact situation of Doctor Fondell's house. The man, after expressing the wish that the young man shouldn't mention him in the matter, as he did not wish to get into trouble, told all he knew in regard to the matter; gave Leonard exact directions so as to reach the establishment of Doctor Fondell without difficulty, and then withdrew.

"What is to be done, Leonard?" exclaimed Margaret.

"Well, I don't exactly know," replied Leonard, with a puzzled air. "Blanche has been put in this lunatic asylum by her guardian, who, of course, has the same authority over her that a father would have. The idea is probably, as she says, to force her into marrying this Allyne Strathroy. It's a very difficult question to handle. I really have no right to interfere in the matter at all. This Chubbet is her legal guardian. Of course he has a right to select the residence of his ward; and though, by many, a private lunatic asylum would not be thought exactly the proper place to put a young lady like Miss Blanche, yet this old fellow, no doubt, would have some plausible reason for it. He might say that she was slightly ill, and that he thought she would receive better care at the asylum than at home. He might say a hundred things equally as reasonable and difficult to find a flaw in. If Blanche was of age now, I'd have her outside of that house in-

side of two hours, in spite of all the lawyers in New York."

"But, can't any thing be done?" asked Margaret, in despair.

"Not fairly," returned Leonard; "this man has the law on his side at present. If I can only think of some ruse now."

"Oh, do think of something!" cried Margaret.

"This case would bother a sharper head than mine," said Leonard, unable to seize upon a feasible idea.

"What is the use of being a lawyer, if you can't have any ideas?" said Margaret, illogically.

"My dear sister, the legal fraternity can't perform miracles any more than any other set of men," replied Leonard.

"Well, if I was a man, I'd go up there and take her out by force!" cried Margaret.

"Yes, and be lodged in the nearest station-house for my trouble, and all without getting Blanche out, either," said Leonard, dryly.

"But, can't you think of something?"

"Yes, by Jove, I can!" Leonard cried, suddenly.

"You have thought of something?" asked Margaret, gleefully. "What is it?"

"Restrain your curiosity, and answer a few questions," said Leonard, smiling at his sister's anxiety.

"How provoking you are, Leonard!" exclaimed Margaret, pouting.

"Never you mind that. Just let your mind go back to the time when you and Blanche were together."

"Well?"

"Has Blanche got any article of yours—a pair of gloves—scissors—knife, or any thing of that kind?"

"Oh, yes, quite a number—"

"That you gave her?"

"Yes."

"Well, that won't do," said the young man, thoughtfully. "I mean any thing—it matters not what it is, no matter how trifling—that you did not give her, and that she took without your saying either yes or no."

"No," replied Margaret, after thinking a moment. "Blanche and I generally exchanged with each other, so of course I gave her the articles."

"That blocks my game," said Leonard, in despair. "Just think again. There must be some little article that she has of yours, that she took without permission."

"No, not a single thing."

"Well, then I guess Miss Blanche will have to stay where she is until I think of another plan," said Leonard, rather discontentedly.

"Oh!" cried Margaret, suddenly.

"Well?"

"I've thought of something!" exclaimed the girl, in delight.

"You have!" Leonard's spirits were rising.

"Yes; will a picture do?"

"What kind?"

"Only a *carte de visite*!"

"That will do!" cried Leonard, in triumph. "Describe the circumstances."

"It was our last day at school. The pictures were lying on the table. Blanche came in and said, 'I'm going to take one of these, Margaret.' I said, 'Don't, because they're all promised. I'll get you one in New York; and then I thought she put it down on the table, but she didn't. She carried it off, and said afterward that she thought it was real mean in me to make her steal it.'"

"Aha!" cried Leonard, in glee; "then she admitted the act. That's all I want. Get on your things. You must go with me to the police court."

"What for?" asked Margaret, in astonishment.

"Why, to swear to the facts that you have just related."

"Are you out of your senses?"

"Never you mind!" replied her brother, with an air of triumph. "Just get on your things. I've got a plan to get Blanche out of her prison. I'll explain as we go along."

So Margaret hurried to dress, and then when dressed, accompanied her brother to the nearest police justice.

About two o'clock on this same afternoon, Doctor Fondell was astonished by a violent knocking at his front gate.

Going in haste, he found a policeman and a young man in black standing there. A short distance off, stood a hack.

"Are you Doctor Fondell?" said the policeman, referring to a paper in his hand, that was evidently legal in its nature.

"Yes," replied the doctor, somewhat astonished.

"I have here a warrant to search your house for one Blanche Maybury, accused of theft," said the officer.

This, of course, is easily explained, as Blanche, in her letter, had given full descriptions. But, as the doctor was totally ignorant of the fact that the captive had managed to write and send a letter, the knowledge that this strange young man had of the interior of his mansion and of the abode of the captive girl, appeared wonderful. He could not possibly account for it.

The doctor stood like one thunder-struck. The young man had accurately described the route to the room wherein the doctor had confined Blanche.

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"Don't know nothing about it, except that I want the young woman. I believe she is young, isn't she?" and the officer looked at Leonard, who was the young man in black that accompanied him.

"Yes," replied Leonard.

"And may I ask who you are, sir?" said the doctor, sharply turning upon the young lawyer.

"Oh, yes, you may ask," replied Leonard, blandly; "but as to my replying, that's quite another question."

The officer grinned. He enjoyed the retort.

"This is some absurd mistake!" cried Fondell, who couldn't understand it at all, except that if the officer persisted in executing his duty, it would surely remove Miss Blanche Maybury from his care.

"As I said afore, that ain't got any thing to do with me," said the officer. "I hold a little bit of paper here, which calls for the arrest of Blanche Maybury. She's in your house, I believe, and I want her. That's the long and the short of it, cap."

Then it suddenly flashed into the doctor's head that this might be some plot, put into execution by some friend or lover of Blanche's to rescue her from his house; though he could not comprehend how any one could know that she was there, unless they got the information from Chubbet, who, of course, would not be likely to mention the fact, considering the necessity that there was for keeping the affair secret.

"There is no such person under my roof, sir," said the doctor, firmly. He had determined to put a bold face on and deny that Blanche was in his house, trusting that the officer was not fully confident of the fact, and that, by persisting in a bold denial, he would be able still to retain Blanche in his power.

"Not in your house, eh?" said the officer, with a quiet wink to Leonard.

"No, sir," replied the doctor, firmly.

"Well, then, we've made a mistake, of course, and all we've got for to do is to apologize and retire," said the officer, smilingly, and with a series of winks to Leonard.

"Yes, sir," exclaimed the doctor, loftily, and at the same time chucking in his sleeve at the idea of getting rid of the officer so easily.

"Oh, gammon!" The peculiar tone in which the worthy member of the metropolitan police force uttered the simple sentence, opened Fondell's eyes instantly to the fact that he was not going to get rid of the agent of justice as easily as he had anticipated.

"Now, I'll just trouble you to produce this young woman and not keep me waiting any longer!" exclaimed the officer, in a tone that showed plainly that he was not to be trifled with.

"But, my dear sir," expostulated Fondell, in alarm. "I assure you that there is no such person as Miss Blanche Maybury in my house."

"Just you go and teach your grandmother to milk ducks," was the ambiguous response of the indefatigable officer.

The doctor understood plainly that his word was doubted.

"But I assure you upon my sacred honor," cried the doctor, laying his hand upon his breast in the locality where his heart was supposed to be.

"I don't believe you've got such a thing," said the officer, with a grin.

"The young lady is not here!"

"Oh, gammon!" The officer pronounced the expressive sentence still stronger on this occasion. "Just you produce the girl."

"How can I if she's not here?"

"Oh, that's too 'thin,' now," said the officer, in disgust.

"This gentleman evidently is not aware who is under his roof and who isn't," said Leonard, joining in the conversation. "To show you, sir," he continued, addressing the doctor, "how complete our information is, I will state that we not only know that this lady is in your house, but we can tell you the exact room that she occupies; that is, unless her apartment has been changed in the last two hours."

The doctor looked at the speaker in speechless amazement. This was a riddle for which he could find no explanation.

"You see, cap," said the officer, with a grin. "We know what's going on in your crib, better than you do yourself."

"We shall enter your front door, go up one flight of stairs, go along a hall, open the first door on the left that we come to, and in the room that door opens into we shall find the young lady that we are in search of."

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Can use the sketches, "A WOMAN'S VENGEANCE" and "NANCY AND THE SHAWNEE CHIEF." Also, "A SIGHT CHANGE OF PROGRAMME" and "UNCLE ABNER'S WISDOM." "THE SUNDREDD LOVERS" is not available. No stamps. Ditto "THE FIERCE AND THE SWIFT," "THE FORTRESS," "CLARA ROSS'S NIGHT GUEST," "BUTTERFLY AND THE GARDEN" and "THE NEGRO LECTURE" of Washington. It is not up to Dan Bryant's standard; that is certain, and nothing less will answer for the SATURDAY JOURNAL. The best of it kind is our demand. No stamps.

"A HOME AT LAST" we return as unavailable. The author asks "if it is the proper way to send in MS.—the arrangement, etc.?" which, we suppose, means: is my MS. good copy? It is correctly written.

The two sketches, by L. P. H., will not be able to use. They will answer, however, for some of the other weeklies.

Some writers seem to think any kind of paper will answer for printer's manuscript. Hence, we have all manner of sheets, slips, leaves and scraps—much to the annoyance of both editor and printer. As paper is not expensive, we certainly shall continue to think what is worth reading is worthy of transcription on good note or letter paper. Authors please notice.

"A SISTER'S STORY" we shall have to pronounce unavailable. First person narratives, as a general thing, are not so interesting to the reader as if the "third person" had been used.

Will try and give place to J. R. L.'s communications. Thanks for his good opinion of the S. J. We, ourselves, are of his opinion—that the SATURDAY JOURNAL is the Model Weekly, and we ought to know.

"Who is Joe, Joe, Jr.?" writes a friend to us. "Whoever he is he is a rare good wit and a good poet, as well." Just so; that's who and what he is; and, he is, exclusively, Our Own!

D. L. T. The postal rates of two cents for every four ounces apply to books, manuscripts, proofs, prints or photographs, seeds, etc., etc.—the package not to exceed four pounds in weight. Your package of hardware should, therefore, have had twenty-six cents prepaid on it instead of three dollars, which was full letter rates. The probabilities are the P. O. department did not regard hardware as available matter except at full letter rates.

"A DEFECTED LOVER" says he has fallen in love with an actress, and wishes to know if it is true that actresses are, as a class, unvirtuous, etc. As a class, they are exceedingly tried and tempted, but we believe it is the opinion of all competent to decide that, as a class, they are virtuous. A manager will not knowingly introduce a "woman of the town" even into his ballet corps. If you truly love the woman referred to, seek her acquaintance by an honorable introduction, and learn from association with her just what she is. If no mutual friend is at hand to introduce you, write the lady a respectful note, asking her consent to call upon her as a friend and admirer.

MS. "GEORGE HENSON'S REVENGE" doubtless was thrown into the "Dead End" box—no stamps having been inclosed for its return.

Poem, "TO HER," available. It is as brimming with passionate tenderness as one of Keats' utterances.

Poem, "TWO WAYS," we will file for use. The household essay, "WHAT SHALL WE HAVE FOR DINNER?" we will lay aside for future consideration. I've seen very little of that class of matter.

"THAT LONDON BARY" is good, but we do not—as has frequently been stated in these columns—want foreign stories. The MS. is returned.

"THE STORY OF A BLAQUE CAT" is not to our taste. No stamps. Ditto "MAN'S REWARD" and "TEN TIMES TEN," etc.

Foolscap Papers.

Laid Up.

I HAVE been under a spell of weather; that is, I have been very sick. I washed my feet last week, and by that means I contracted for a cold which at first threw me into a violent indignation and stopped up my right ear, then sealed my nose so effectually that I didn't have a smell of any thing good to eat for eight days, which was very weakening; finally, it threw me

into bed, and although I like to lie, I got a little too much this time, you better believe! A terrible pain got up on my breast, sat down there, and made itself perfectly at home, so much so that the police, which I called in for the purpose, failed to remove or arrest it, and then and there I made up my mind that I would much rather be love-sick, providing some pretty and rich heiress suffered from the same complaint. The doctor bled me for six days, unflinchingly. I don't mean to say that he drew any of my noble blood, but, he bled me in the common acceptance of the phrase, till at last, in spite of all he could do, I got well.

The first night I relapsed into a brown study, and it was with great difficulty, and a sledge-hammer that it was finally broken. The next morning I was tumbled head over heels into a fever that had no ague in it, and drink, drink was all my cry—that is, always my cry, but this time it was water. I wanted—preposterous as it may seem to unthinking minds. The Atlantic ocean wouldn't have been more than half a draught, and I envied the fish in the sea. Then I didn't know a thing for seven hours; but, this being a common affliction, I wasn't worried about it in the least.

They said I was in a kind of delirium without the tremors, but it seems to me that if the tremors had been thrown in it would have been a little comfort by way of a change. While in that condition I calmly ate up two quilts and a feather-bed; then got up and wrote an excellent piece of poetry—which shows the state of mind that is necessary for such an undertaking. When the doctor saw the verses he became fearfully alarmed; so he seized a pen with both hands and wrote a stinging criticism on it, which had the effect of counteracting the influence of the poem, and I laid down in the wood-box and into a gentle slumber.

Next morning, when I was introduced to myself, I thought I was somebody I had seen before, but wasn't altogether pleased with my acquaintance, or gratified with my appearance. The pain seemed to be removed to my brain, for the doctor said there was probably some there, but that the pain would not remain long in such a close place; so he told me to lie very quiet and if I found it moving away not to detain it on any account, not even to ask it for the rent. I was so weak that I couldn't wrestle with a beefsteak—w weaker than restaurant soup, which is hardly able to bear the name.

I didn't have even the power of an attorney left, and I was obliged to take banking-powder whenever I wanted to raise myself. In such reduced circumstances I was I that I wasn't hardly able to raise my expenses without a good deal of assistance. My pulse couldn't beat any thing hardly, and there was several important sections missing from my constitution, so that I was compelled to send it to Washington city to have it repaired. It had been badly infringed upon, and my general health wasn't pretty good either. I was so pale that I looked almost like a white man.

Oh, it is hard to lie in bed when you are obliged to do so; otherwise I am fond of it. It grows wearisome to lie and look at the same picture on the walls day after day—to see the hunter in that picture aiming all day long at that lion who crouches to spring all day long too and don't, till you long to get up and hit the fellow on the back of the head and make him accidentally break his neck, or fire the gun off. It is sad, too, to lie and hear the dinner-bells ring for happy hungry people, and for the purpose of spiting you who have to subsist entirely upon pills and broth, which you don't hanker after either. It's all very bad.

When I did get up, at last, I walked around the house with a great deal of pleasure and two crutches, and was obliged to use a mustard-plaster when I wanted to draw on my boots. I was so thin that when I was dressed I looked like a clothes-line with a week's washing on it, and I ought to have been only two feet and a half high to keep up any thing like proportion. The doctor recommended ale to strengthen me. I always liked that prescription, and I may say, without joking, that I pitched into it pretty strong for a weak man at least, and now I have recovered my avoirdupois and my equipoise, and stand ready to defend the orphan, punish my enemies, or borrow money to anybody's content.

ADVICE.

I ONCE got myself into a pretty scrape by giving advice promiscuously, and it made me feel so bad that I couldn't eat any thing but broiled chicken and Washington pie for a fortnight. I resolved to be very careful in the future. I learned the truth of the proverb, that "Advice to all is security to none." Suppose I advocate a short courtship—won't Mrs. Awfulcareful tell you that hasty marriages rarely turn out happily, and that two people who are to live as one should know something of the character of each other? I considered Mrs. A.'s advice first rate, and I felt that it would be a good plan to keep journals registering each day the sayings and doings, the good actions done and the wrong deeds committed; then to let an exchange of these books be made between the lover and the betrothed, so that each could read the history of the other's life ere they jumped into the sea of matrimony. After marriage

there would be none of that fear of blackmail being levied upon them, or the dread of some little incident in your past life popping up and casting a dark shadow over your happiness. Deception I abominate especially among married people.

It's all very romantic to think that when a man weds, the thoughts and actions of his past life are all blotted out, and that he is a new being who will idolize his wife until she goes to that land, "Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest"—I say that's very romantic. But, it's far more practical to think of the thousand and one little irritations which occur in married life, trifles in themselves, mere notions, yet they drift in the ocean of great trouble and make plenty of money for the divorce lawyers.

On the other side, long engagements are disagreeable and love waxes cold. We should get tired of having sweets forever; and, how weary lovers' talk does become at times! A surfeit of sweet things is not to be desired.

So, young people, marry young; but let me advise you to know something of him or her with whom you are to pass your life. Brevity in epistolary correspondence is a most excellent thing, yet I have known a young girl to pass a restless night on account of a brief letter from her young swain. And why? Simply because his letter was "so short." Good gracious! did she want the man to write over a ream of foolscap paper just to indite the three simple words "I love you?" I give you these illustrations to show you that advice to all is security for none.

What say you to short dresses? I don't like them, because they make a female the object of the staring eyes of loafers. By the way, it isn't only loafers who stare at a lady's ankles, I grieve to say. A woman can't go anywhere without her ankles being looked at. Yet short dresses are healthy and are graceful. But what is health compared to modesty? I have known women willing to sacrifice their health for their modesty, strange as it may appear to you; but it wasn't I!

I was rather timid when I commenced this article, because I feared some might not take my advice kindly. Once I advised a young lady who was about sitting for a photograph to look cheerful. Yet, when the picture was presented to me, she appeared as though she had been peeling onions. So, good advice was out of place in that case.

In writing for the press, if you have a good thing to say, say it, and in as few words as possible. Don't use one whole sheet to tell what the reader can find out for himself in the first ten lines. I have never noticed that when authors write for Beadle's Dime Novels, or the SATURDAY JOURNAL, they are not obliged to cover dozens of paper with their articles; hence, we get only the "pith" and "sense" of their productions.

Beat Time is always to the point, sharp, short and pun-gent, and what is more, he is original. Mrs. Time must have a good time; I hope she is never inclined to beat time.

Yet, we can't all be writers. We can buy pen, ink and paper, but we can't buy brains; such possessions must come naturally. I'll not advise you, Miss Laura Matilda, to refrain from composition, yet at the same time I would advise you to bear a few "unavailable's" in a composed manner. Did you never think what an awful bore it must be for an editor to wade through a stupid manuscript, and in the end find it unsuitable? That is a waste of time, and time to an editor is almost as precious as money. I have seen some beings awfully mad because their effusions were rejected, and say: "I'll never send that editor another of my articles." I couldn't help saying: "If you want to spite him you had better send him another," and wasn't I right?

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT IT.

Life in the country is very pleasant. Death in the country may be pleasant, too; but I haven't tried that yet.

I sleep every night in a strawberry-bed, and wake in the morning to find myself, like my notes, all over dew.

I scarcely count me any thing to live in the country. I don't know that it is any of your business what it costs my neighbors. Some of them wonder at my living so cheaply. When I have vegetables for dinner, they say that I can beat the nation at cabbaging, and that there's no telling what may turn up on my table.

But I have won the affections of them all. In fact, I have won nothing else from them yet, as I am such a poor hand at seven-up. They admire me greatly, and think that distance lends enchantment to the view of me. They are about to publish a circular, telling the world what a splendid fellow I am, in the hope that somebody will come along and steal me. They all want me to rise in life, and one enthusiastic friend has been heard to say that if hemp will help me up, he will subscribe liberally. If I was a candidate for the penitentiary, I would run ahead of my ticket (of leave).

Next to good friends, the most necessary thing on a farm is a good dog. I have one, and I call him Watch, because he is a watch-dog. He got hold of my wife's watch the other day, after she had carefully laid it away on the floor, and what a time he had! He went through it in no time,

and after he had got through it there was no time. I don't think it has gone through him yet, as I have to wind him up every night with a club; but I don't think I would have it to do if the neighbors didn't run him down. I don't know why he should take a notion to such indigestible food, when there are plenty of good provisions over at Jim Brown's.

Watch is a good house-dog; in fact, it is impossible to keep him out of the house. He is also a safe dog; in truth, nothing is safe in the safe while he lives. He watches the neighbors' hen-roosts with great perseverance, which accounts for his being so purry of late. He is a well-meaning dog—when ever he sucks a nest full of eggs, he is careful to put the shells back, so that the hen may not miss any thing. One of the neighbors lately told me that every dog has his day, and he thinks that Watch's day is nearly ended.

Watch belongs to the celebrated breed of yaller dogs. The original progenetrix of the breed was noted for sucking eggs, which accounts for the beautiful color of the animal. Watch is a full-blooded descendant of hers, without a cross, and I wouldn't like to cross him, as he is inclined to be savage.

My wife's cats are of a very fine breed, also. They never make any trouble about the house, as the rats won't let them stay indoors. When I lie awake at night, listening to their melody, I don't wonder that the inwards of such animals are good for fiddle-strings. The only wonder is, that people don't use them for trombones and French horns. One of them kitted in my boot a while ago, and I wasn't able to walk for a week after I tried that boot on. It didn't hurt the cat.

It is all a humbug about feeding gravel to hogs to make them lay eggs. I have tried it, and it only makes them lay down. My wife says that the agricultural periodical from which I got that prescription advised feeding gravel to hens; but I am sure it said hogs. Do you know any thing about it?

BOY LOVE.

ONE of the queerest and funniest things to think of, in after life, is boy-love. No sooner does a boy acquire a tolerable station than he begins to imagine himself a man, and to ape manish ways. He casts side-glances at the tall girls he may meet; becomes a regular attendant at church or meeting; carries a cane; holds his head erect, and struts a little in his walk, presently; and, how very soon he falls in love! yes, falls is the proper word, because it best indicates his happy, delirious self-abandonment. He lives now in a fury region; somewhat collateral to the world, and yet blended somehow inextricably with it. He perfumes his hair with fragrant oils, scatters essences over his handkerchief, and desperately shaves and anoints for a beard. He quotes poetry in which "love" and "dove" and "heart" and "dart" peculiarly predominate; and he plunges deeper in the delicious labyrinth, fancies himself filled with the divine afflatus, and suddenly breaks into a scarlet rash—of rhyme. He feeds upon the looks of his beloved; is raised to heaven if she speaks a pleasant word; is betrayed into the most sublime ecstasies by a smile; and is plunged into the gloomiest regions of misanthropy by a frown.

He believes himself the most devoted lover in the world. He is the one great idolator. He is the very type of magnanimity and self-abnegation. Wealth? He despises the groveling thought. Poverty, with his adorable beloved, he rapturously apostrophizes as the first of all blessings; and love in a cottage, with water and crust, is his ideal paradise of delights.

He declares with the most solemn emphasis, that he would go through fire and water—undertake a pilgrimage to the North pole or Kamtschatka—swim storm-tossed oceans—scale impassable mountains, and face a legion of bayonets—but for one smile of his beloved. He dotes upon a flower she casts away. He cherishes her glove—a little worn in the fingers—next his heart. He sighs like a locomotive letting off steam. He scrawls her dear name over quires of foolscap—a fitting medicine for his insanity. He scornfully deprecates the attentions of other boys of his own age; calls John Prince dead, because he said that the adorable Angelina had curly hair, and passes Arthur Stanley contemptuously for daring to compare that gawky Mary Ames with his incomparable Angelina.

He dreams dreams of great things which he will accomplish as warrior, statesman, poet. He will astonish his beloved with his genius, and, in beholding the world at his feet, will rejoice for her sake alone. For, what are all honors—all glory, but tributes to her worth? What would be all honors—all glory, if unshared by her?

Happy, happy, foolish boy-love! With its hopes and fears—its raptures and its torments—its ecstatic furies and terrible heart-burnings—its solemn ludicrousness and its intensely prosaic termination—the grown-up boy of sixty years looks back to it and says: "how foolish I was then! and if I could only go back and live my life over, I would let the girls alone." But, the chances are two to one he would act just as foolish—for it is according to nature, and human nature, the world over.

WE PARTED YESTERDAY.

BY JOSEPH LEONARD.  
Will we meet no more on this troubled shore—  
Was that our last farewell,  
When we rode through the gray of yesterday,  
While the tears of winter fell,  
Well, be it so! Full well I know  
Your blessing will always stay,  
And whisper still, like a summer fill,  
"We parted but yesterday."  
Though the words were few of our last adieu,  
Yet your hand closed over mine,  
With a clasp that still has power to thrill  
My heart, like "Auld lang syne."  
And though years roll on, till my strength is gone,  
Watching my hopes decay, and I am old,  
Yet I still will cling to the past, and sing,  
"We parted but yesterday."  
I will close my eyes when the summer skies  
Beam bright on a blooming scene—  
When the wild bees' hum through my windows  
Come  
To tell me the earth is green.  
And with memory's light, I will see the white  
Of each crystal-crested spray,  
And the frost and sleet again will meet,  
As they did but yesterday.  
And when we meet in the Golden Street,  
When our voyage on Time is o'er—  
When the waves of tears in the gulf of years  
Can wreck our hearts no more,  
Then our hands will grasp with the old time clasp,  
And it seems I will hear you say:  
"The present and past have met at last,  
And we parted but yesterday."

City Life Sketches.

AIMEE LA VAIGNE, The Countess.

BY AGILE PENNE.

BACK from the green hills of Berkshire come I in obedience to a letter written by my uncle, Jabez Sneed, Esq.,  
Worked almost to death I had flown—  
Bird-like—from the heated city to the shelter  
Of the green pines that grow by the upper  
waters of the Housatonic; yet right glad was I when I received the missive that called me back to New York. The reason is easily explained. Jabez Sneed, my worthy uncle, was a wealthy man, and I, his nephew, was only a poor devil of a writer, depending upon my brains for a living.

My uncle was a kind-hearted old gentleman, who had made his money by a lucky speculation in Western lands; a man who had long since retired from active life. By nature he was as simple as a child. His letter informed me that he had concluded that he needed a secretary and should be pleased to have me accept the position. The salary was liberal, and gladly I jumped at the offer; the more so, that in the household of Mr. Sneed was a certain hazel-eyed girl, who had tangled up my roving's heart in the meshes formed by the soft glances of her bright eyes. She was the daughter of a deceased friend of my uncle; thrown penniless and unprotected upon the world, he had been to her as a father, Alice Nagol—so she was called—was such a perfect body. She was but twenty, yet had the cultured grace and dignity of a woman of forty, blended with the charming innocence of girlhood. Her full hazel eyes were as bright as stars and as guileless in their look as the round orbs of a young kitten. A well-proportioned figure, a round, rosy face, glowing with the bloom of health, was it to be wondered at that I had looked with admiring eyes upon the gentle girl? Not that I had ever dared to dream of loving—or of winning her. I looked upon her with the same eyes that I have looked upon the face of a Madonna, beaming upon me from the painter's canvas. But for all that I was glad that I was about to become an inmate of the same house that she brightened with her presence.

Within five minutes after I entered my uncle's house I was astonished. Jabez Sneed, Esq., an old bachelor of sixty, was going to be married. The bride was a girl of twenty, apparently. A dark-eyed, dark-haired beauty with an olive-tinted complexion, Miss Aimee La Vaigne, so my uncle introduced her, after startling me with the intelligence that I was about to become acquainted with his future wife. I could hardly speak, so great was my astonishment. That my uncle should marry after remaining single so long was indeed a wonder.

I took a dislike to my uncle's choice the moment I set eyes upon her, not that I was prejudiced against her on account of her being my uncle's chosen one, but because of her coming into any of his money as I had of being chosen Sultan of Turkey. But there was something about the girl, or woman—whichever she was—that impressed me unfavorably. There was something about her that reminded me of a snake. She was beautiful, but it was the beauty of the serpent. The contrast between her and Alice was as great as that between night and day.

After a few minutes' conversation, my uncle carried me off into his library. Then he explained to me that he had been arranging all his affairs in anticipation of his approaching marriage, and I found to my utter astonishment that he had some twenty thousand dollars worth of government bonds in the house. He had that very day sold out all his railroad stock and reinvested in government securities.

Of course I naturally observed that it was hazardous to keep such an amount of money in such portable shape in the house.  
"Oh, no," replied my uncle, "no one knows of it, excepting Aimee, and of course she is not likely to mention it. It was by her advice that I changed my railroad stock for the bonds. She has a very clear head for business."  
Now when I heard these words a certain sort of uneasiness took possession of me, and I couldn't very well explain why.  
"Besides," continued my uncle, "I shall put them in the hands of the Safe Deposit Company to-morrow."  
"And to-night?" I asked.  
"I'll hide them away somewhere," he replied.  
After dinner I got a chance to speak to Alice alone. From her I learned the whole history of my uncle's acquaintance with Miss Aimee La Vaigne. He had met her at Saratoga, and had been fascinated at the first glance. Her story was a very simple one. She was a Creole from



New Orleans; her father was a French count, who, traveling in the South, had met and married her mother, who was also of French descent. Both her parents had died of yellow fever when she was but a child. She was attended by a gentleman whom she introduced as her uncle, and who represented himself to be a wealthy sugar-planter.

Mr. Sneed, after a few weeks acquaintance, had proposed and been accepted by the dark-eyed Aimee, and he had brought her home to New York to prepare for the nuptials, as she had represented herself as being—the uncle of course excepted—without a relative in the world.

This was the story of the woman whom my uncle was about to make his wife.

"And so," I said, after Alice had finished, "she is really a countess, then?"

"Yes, so she says," she replied, with a slight expression of doubt upon her face. "She told me that at her home in the South the servants always called her 'the countess.' That was before the war."

"And what do you think of her?" I asked.

"She may be a countess, but she is not a lady," she replied, slowly; "she does a great many things that are so unladylike. I have tried to like her but I can not, and I am sure that it is not often that I take a dislike to any one."

"Mr. Sneed seems very much devoted to her."

"Yes, but I do not think that she cares anything for him," she replied, quickly.

"You do not?"

"No," she spoke quite decidedly.

"Why so?"

"Because she does not show by her manner that she cares for him, and I think that when a woman does love, she will show it in a hundred little ways."

Alice was a closer observer than I had guessed her to be.

"Did you notice what magnificent diamonds she wears?" she continued.

"Her ear-rings? Yes, I did notice them," I answered.

"Such a strange pattern, too," she said—"a single diamond held in the mouth of a gold snake. The diamonds are very large. They must be worth a thousand dollars each, at the very least."

"Perhaps they are California diamonds," I suggested.

"They look like real ones," she replied.

My uncle and the "countess" joining us, put a stop to the conversation.

For the next hour I watched my uncle's future wife attentively. There was a restless look about her eyes, varying lines that played now and then about the corners of the full, red-lipped mouth, that I did not like.

Our little party about ten o'clock separated and sought their respective bedrooms.

My dreams that night were far from being pleasant ones. A golden snake wound its glittering coils around me, and its lurid eyes, that glared into mine, were the dark, restless orbs of Miss La Vigne, the "countess."

The consequence of these bad dreams was that I did not get any sound sleep until morning, and, therefore, I overslept myself.

I was awakened by a light tap at my door. Hastily dressing myself I opened it, and my uncle entered.

The look of trouble upon his face astonished me.

"Is anything the matter, sir?" I asked, in wonder.

"Agile, I have been robbed!" exclaimed my uncle.

"Robbed?"

"Yes—all my bonds are gone—twenty thousand dollars!" said he, with a groan.

"Is it possible?" I exclaimed, completing my toilet in a hasty manner.

"Yes; I put them under my pillow last night; this morning they were gone."

"Was your door locked?"

"Yes."

Then I followed my uncle down-stairs to his room. As he opened the door, I noticed something glisten on the little rug before the door. I stooped and picked it up. It was one of Miss Aimee's ear-rings. Here was a clue to the robber. I said nothing, but put the jewel in my pocket.

Of course I discovered nothing in the room that would denote who the robber was. I suggested to my uncle to keep the fact of the robbery quiet, but to send a note to the Central Police Station for a detective.

This was done.

After the servant was gone I started downtown. My destination was Tiffany's jewelry store. I wanted to find out if the diamond of the "countess" was genuine or not. If it was not, it might indicate that she, like the diamond, was not what she had represented herself to be.

To my utter astonishment the clerk pronounced it a genuine jewel, and worth about twelve hundred dollars. A black-bearded gentleman who happened to be purchasing some article at the time, also examined it, stating that he was an expert in precious stones, and he confirmed the opinion of the jeweler.

I left the store with my head in a maze. Could it be possible that I had wronged the "countess," and that my surmises were all at fault.

I got in a car and rode up-town again.

I was completely puzzled. I resolved, however, to tell the detective when he should come of the circumstance of my finding the jewel just by the door of my uncle's room; and yet, that in reality proved nothing.

What was more likely than for my uncle to bid his affianced wife good-night at the door of his own room, and to give her a good-night kiss there? The fact of the diamond being there could easily be explained.

As I ascended the steps of my uncle's house I noticed a man sauntering slowly down the street, and in the hasty glance that I cast at him I recognized the black-bearded stranger who had examined the diamond so carefully in the jewelry-store.

I entered the house. My uncle, the "countess" and Alice were all in the front parlor.

A single glance at my uncle's mournful face told me that he had not discovered any clue to explain the robbery.

A ring at the bell, and a servant brought word that a gentleman desired to see the master of the house on particular business.

My uncle and I exchanged glances as he desired the visitor to be shown up. The same thought occurred to both of us. The detective had come.

Judge of my astonishment when the black-bearded man entered the parlor.

He started with surprise when he saw the "countess," while she, with a little scream, arose and faced him like an angry snake.

"The 'countess'—dog my cats if 'tain't!" he cried.

"You know that lady?" I said, in amazement.

"You bet," he said, emphatically; "Julia Foster, the smartest confidence-woman in the country. I'm Captain Hyams, of the detective force, of New Orleans. I tracked you, young man, by the diamond. Those ear-rings were stolen by this woman's husband, Mat Foster, from Mrs. Colonel Jones, of Orleans. I gobbled Mat at Newport yesterday, and I had an idea that this feminine couldn't be far off. It was just luck your coming into that store."

Of course the game was up; the "countess" had taken the bonds and hid them up in the attic. On being charged with the theft she admitted it, and told where the plunder was hid. A skeleton key had gained her access to my uncle's room.

The revelation completely cured my uncle of his passion. Now he announces his intention to leave all his property to Alice.

In my heart I almost wish that he had married the "countess," for then there would have been a chance for me with Alice, but now she's an heiress and I—am nothing.

P. S. I think there is a chance for me, for my uncle is going to speculate in Brooklyn lots. If he does, the probabilities are that Alice will not be an heiress, and that I shall yet win her!

**A Change of Programme.**

BY FANNY ELLIOTT.

Mrs. Vinton's ball was at its height; the band was playing the redowa polka for the scores of twinkling feet that kept time to its sweet music; staid mammas and shrewd papas sat on the elegant sofas that were placed for the special accommodation of wall-flowers, and criticised the toilettes, style, and conduct of every couple as they whirled by.

Outside, where the piercing cold air blew a keen, frosty healthfulness, stood a tall figure, whose apparently graceful form was enveloped in a military cloak, that well became his style. He wore an infantry cap, and as he raised his gloved hand to lower the visor of his cap, a shoulder-strap gleamed in the starlight. His face was handsome; dark, with brilliant blue eyes, and long, curling lashes; with hair of a rich brown, cut closely to his finely-modeled head; with heavy side-whiskers and mustache. All to

gether Colonel Grafton Somerville, of the Tenth Regular Infantry, was as good a specimen of mankind as one might care to see.

He stood on the little balcony that surrounded the window, evidently looking for some one; and suddenly his roving eyes ceased, and were fixed on a couple who, in their turn, came gracefully circling toward the window.

The lady was scarcely twenty, fair, petite and stylish; evidently a belle, judging from the glances that continually followed her.

Her partner was considerably her senior; a noble-faced man, with dark, brilliant eyes, and a stern dignity of manner that became him well.

Directly the music died away, like a summer breeze among the forest tree-tops, and Colonel Somerville saw the lady take her partner's arm for a promenade.

"Miss Jernyngham, you will grant me those five minutes in the large bay-window, now? I beseech of you, please."

"If you insist, Mr. Eldred. But, really, I do want to dance that German forming."

Corla Jernyngham smiled in his eager, sternly grave, yet impassioned face, a bewitching smile, half saucy, half affectionate.

"There will be a dozen chances for your favorite German to-night; while I may never see you again, Miss Cora, I leave early in the morning."

They had drawn near the window where Colonel Somerville was standing; and he drew back, close to a huge pillar that completely hid him.

"I'm in for it, any how," and as he thought the words, a peculiar smile came to his handsome face.

The gentleman and lady were so near him, that he heard the quick, excited breathing of Darcy Eldred as he drew Cora's hand from his arm, and raised it to his lips.

"I couldn't go away, Miss Jernyngham, Cora, without telling you how dear you are to me. Oh, Cora! just a word from you to me, make my whole life bloom forever! Without you, I must go on, as I have gone for years; weary, lonely."

His voice grew as low and tender as a woman's.

"Cora, you do not answer; you don't even look at me with those all-glorious eyes. Tell me, Cora, may I call you 'darling'?"

Both men—the lover and the spy—waited for the girl's answer; the answer that was to be, to her, her own doom.

They waited, and she little recked her danger.

After a silence, Cora Jernyngham glanced up, half-coldly, half-timidly.

"I am so surprised. Really, Mr. Eldred, I never dreamed you loved me. I thought, I was sure it was Laurie Cliff you cared for, and I know she loves you. Oh, I didn't mean to say that."

She paused, like a frightened child who has disclosed a forbidden secret.

"There, Cora, you reject me? You don't want my love, the only time I ever offered it to a living woman, or ever will?"

A pleading, pained expression was on his face, but Cora turned away.

"You have been mistaken, Mr. Eldred. I am very sorry; I never meant to win your love; I never meant to—"

"Flirt! I suppose you mean, Miss Jernyngham. I thank you for your frankness; and I now relinquish the one dream of my life."

He let go her hand, and bowed gravely.

"Please go in before me, Mr. Eldred. I will follow in a moment."

And that was all she said to the noble-hearted man, to whom, to lose her, was worse than death itself.

After he had gone in, she smiled.

"Ah, susceptible Mr. Eldred, you little think I merely am using you as an instrument toward becoming acquainted with your nearest, dearest friend, Colonel Somerville, the handsome, the gallant, who has already won my heart. What if Laurie Cliff, with her blue eyes and sun-brown hair, has told me she would die for him—the elegant stranger-colonel? What if I made him think she was in love with my grave suitor? I will win Colonel Somerville, Laurie Cliff notwithstanding."

She entered the window, threw aside her heavy opera cloak, that the thoughtfulness of Darcy Eldred had thrown around her.

Colonel Somerville stepped from his position, with a strange expression in his eyes, and a smile on his lips that one could not comprehend.

He entered the door, ascended to the dressing-room; and shortly after entered the saloon on Darcy Eldred's arm; the lion of the evening, the cynosure of all eyes.

Miss Jernyngham's elegant, spacious sitting-room was as cosy as Laurie Cliff's tidy hands could make it; and even now, as Miss Jernyngham leaned idly back in the blue velvet chair, Laurie's busy fingers were picking an almost invisible shred from the blue and fawn velvet carpet.

The wedding day dawned; Cora Jernyngham's wedding day, and while below stairs the guests were filling the spacious rooms, she was arranging her elegant bridal robes, while Laurie Cliff's cold hands were vainly striving to clasp the costly pearl bracelets.

"You are ten times more nervous than I, Laurie! I do wish you'd please remember that the time has come for you to check this foolish love for Grafton Somerville! Remember, too, Laurie, that the love you give him now, as a hopeless, childish passion, will be a sinful wrongdoing in an hour from now."

Corla surveyed herself in her glass as she spoke with a self-satisfied air; then she looked around for Laurie.

But Laurie was not there; she was alone.

"How stupid in her to go before my veil is adjusted. She's gone to dress herself; I'll warrant!"

And Miss Jernyngham opened the communicating door between her room and Laurie Cliff's. At first she opened her eyes in wrathful surprise, then she stood still in an attitude of proud, voiceless questioning.

She looked a very empress in her trailing robes, and lace-flounced and ddrskirt. A tuquet of orange-blossoms rose and fell with every motion of her exquisitely rounded bosom. A tiara of pearls crowned her haughty head, and her midnight black hair reached in rich curls to her waist.

Her handkerchief, a filmy thing, yellow with age, depended from her hand by a tiny golden chain; and thus she stood, a vivid contrast to the girl for whom she was seeking.

On her bended knees was Laurie, poor, stricken Laurie, now kissing in passionate eagerness a picture of Grafton Somerville; and then, her sad, haunting eyes lifted heavenward, she seemed imploring Heaven's strength for her hour of supreme weakness.

Her beautiful sun-gold hair had escaped from its net, and glittered to the floor in one shining mass.

"And what am I to understand from all this?"

Corla Jernyngham spoke coldly, curtly; and covered with blushes, Laurie sprung to her feet.

She had not time to answer before Grafton Somerville entered the room.

"I will answer that question, ladies; and assure you that it means what neither of you suspect. It means, Cora Jernyngham, that I never will marry you! It means that

deaden the torturing thoughts that made his life miserable; and he braved death with a fearlessness that made his name a synonym of heroism. He was worshipped by his men, and wherever was seen his tall form, battling with the foe, could be found his faithful followers, ready to die in his defense.

Only second to him was Captain Henry Vinton. He lacked the commanding presence, but in reckless daring, in a total disregard of danger in every form, he was not surpassed by even Colonel Rodney.

And these two men, drawn together by similar tastes, by their utter loneliness, by their griefs and their despair, were the staunchest of friends.

Henry rode up to where the colonel was sitting, and took a place at his side.

"Colonel, I have come to ask a favor."

"It is already granted, captain; that is, if within my power."

For answer, Captain Vinton placed in the colonel's hand the card which Detective Weller gave him so many months before.

"And you have waited all this time!" exclaimed Colonel Rodney. "Captain, you are a martyr to principle or patriotism! which?"

"Neither, I fear, colonel; but to my own doubts."

"Doubt no longer. But how in the world did that detective learn her hiding-place so far from where any one would think of searching? It is a mystery to me. But, Henry—Paul spoke with much hesitation—you may be too late."

"I have thought of all that," replied the captain, sadly; "but, I can not rest without a trial. Can I go?"

"Captain, you wrong me by repeating the question."

"Thank you, colonel. I will start for Palm Grove at once."

"Pick your men, captain."

"I go alone, colonel."

"I fear to have you, captain. We are yet on hostile ground."

"Very true; but I must go alone. I will be very careful, and shall return before you break camp."

"You must be very careful," again cautioned the colonel.

With a feeling of joy that he had not known for long months, Henry vaulted into the saddle, and set out for Palm Grove.

He rode cautiously at first, scanning both sides of the road, for now he was so near to Ella, life was very sweet.

The road, nearly all the way, was through a thick wood, yet, after he had traversed half the distance and met nothing to excite suspicion, he relaxed his vigilance, and gave himself up to a reverie of anticipated pleasure.

It was a fatal mistake. Leaving the camp but a moment after him, was a wily foe, private Allan Wentworth. By a shorter cut he reached a lonely spot in the woods in advance of his victim, and stationing himself in a dense hazel thicket, he awaited his coming.

Henry, doubting and fearing for the success of his mission, had allowed his horse to slacken speed as he neared Palm Grove, and absorbed in thought, he rode abreast of the ambush.

His horse gave him warning of the danger, but he did not heed it. A desperate face rose out of the bushes, and with the suddenness of a thunderbolt, the fatal shot was given, and Captain Vinton reeled and fell from the saddle, while his terrified horse dashed away toward Palm Grove.

Coming out of the woods but a little way from where Captain Vinton fell, was George Matthews' party. They heard the shot, but could not overtake the assassin. They saw the body in the road, and halting long enough to see that the man was yet alive, George Matthews left a squad to take him to the camp, while he rode on with the remainder of the party and his fair prisoners.

Reaching the camp, Ella and Meta were shown every attention compatible with their situation. George Matthews vacated his own tent for their use, and took them supper himself.

"I am really sorry to inconvenience you, ladies," said he, with mock courtesy; "but, as the fortunes of war have placed you in my power, I beg that you will judge me leniently."

Meta smiled with cold disdain.

"Your acts call for all the apologies that you can invent, yet you can make it nothing more nor less than a cowardly war upon defenseless women. A dozen men or more to capture you!"

The coward heard her through, while a look of cruel cunning became visible on his face.

"The scorn of such as you affects me but a trifle," said he, with a smile that meant more than his words; "at least it does not change my purposes toward you. You spurned me once, but you never shall again."

He ended this demoniacal thrust with a short, hard, cruel laugh, that chilled the blood of his helpless listeners. And thus he left them. Speechless, they nestled closer to each other, and bore the torture. The supper went untasted and unnoticed. They could hear the steady tramp of the guard, as he paced to and fro before the tent, the laugh and ribald jests of a party grouped around the fire, and occasionally the voice of George Matthews; but no word of comfort, of hope, of succor.

But hark! What is it that tightens up Ella's face with blessed hope? Does she hear Henry Vinton's voice as he stands by the fire? Henry Vinton, alive and well, save the little bullet's furrow on his head which only stunned him? Can she tell that voice from all the rest? Yes, from all the world! And she forgets their parting—forget every thing only that he is near in their dire extremity.

With a cry of joy, she disengaged herself from the wondering Meta's arms, and rushing out of the tent, regardless of the sentinel's glistering bayonet, she fell, sobbing, on Henry's breast.

What joy, what bliss, to once more hold the dear form in close embrace! Then came the harrowing remembrance of their situation.

"Oh, my darling! how have I found you?" he moaned.

And she looked up and cried: "Save me! save me! Henry! And Meta!"

"Meta! where is she?"

"A prisoner like myself. Can you save us from his power?"

"God helping me, you shall be saved," said Henry; "but, alas! I am a prisoner too."

"Oh, Henry!"

"Take courage, my darling. I will save you or die with you."

George Matthews now approached, and almost brutally forced Ella back to the tent.



A CHANGE OF PROGRAMME.

"Make it as pleasant as you can, Laurie, for I shall ask Grafton right in here. The drawing-room is too formal for him, he says. He begged me to admit him here."

Corla surveyed the room critically.

"There, that psyche is a trifle one-sided,—just alter its position, will you? And I wish to goodness you'd shorten up your face; you look like a superannuated old maid. What ever is the matter with you?"

Corla had suddenly changed her voice to one of fretfulness, and Laurie's cheeks flushed a moment at the rude language.

"I wasn't aware that anything ailed me to such an extent that you observed it. I really have severe headaches lately."

Laurie's face attested the truth of her words.

"Well, don't let Colonel Somerville see you looking so forlorn; I'd feel ashamed of you. I do think if you'd use your money in buying fine clothes, and letting people know you are not as poor as they suppose you, you'd do the right thing."

Laurie's answer came quickly.

"If I choose to let my seventy thousand dollars lie undisturbed in the bank, and am willing to take the place of your housekeeper, merely for a private experiment of my own, I think no one has any right to dictate."

"But you forget, one of the conditions of this scheme of yours was, that you were not to interfere in any way with my company for one year."

"And have I? I haven't said a word to you since."

But there came a little flush on her cheeks as she spoke.

"Not directly, I admit. But you have several times opened the parlor door for Colonel Somerville."

"I'll not do it again. I'll promise."

There was a quiet dignity in her tone that provoked Cora, as it always did.

"Oh, yes, that's all very fine, when you know you are over head and ears in love with him yourself! Well, I don't care! He shows who he likes quite plainly."

And if attention was a criterion, surely Colonel Somerville had found his ideal in pretty Cora Jernyngham. Since the night of their introduction, at Mrs. Vinton's ball, he had visited her; and now, when eight months had gone by, and the September breezes were cooling the heated earth, Cora Jernyngham wore the diamond ring that had sparkled on Colonel Somerville's finger.

And Darcy Eldred, with his wounded affections, had been forgotten by the coquette.

## The Banker's Ward:

OR,  
The Shadowy Terror of Arrancourt.

BY GEO. S. KAIME.

CHAPTER XXII.

IN THE TOLLS

The shrill notes of the bugle rung out the call to halt, and Colonel Paul Rodney alighted and threw himself on the grass to wait for the wagon-train to come up.

He was perfectly at home in this wild life. He loved it; and it was so much the opposite of his feelings. Days and nights in the saddle could not curb his restlessness. He craved excitement and danger, to





"So Paul did not come!" moaned Meta, bursting into tears. "Will he ever come? But I am selfish. You have found Henry. I will rejoice with you."

#### CHAPTER XXIII. THE TRAIL RUN DOWN.

COLONEL RODNEY waited for Captain Vinton until the sun was an hour high, and then ordered the command forward. Even then he was loth to believe that any harm had befallen Henry, but to make matters sure, he left a squad of men, under the command of Captain Harding, to go over to Palm Grove.

Captain Harding was not quite so easy about Henry, and he ordered his men into a gallop. They did not take the same road that Henry chose, although they did not know it at the time. The horses were reeking with foam when the troop reached Palm Grove.

"Has Captain Vinton been here?" asked Harding of an old negro, who stood at the gate watching their approach.

"I s'pec' he hab," said the old man, "kase de gals is gone."

"Have you seen him?"

"Lor' bless ye! no, I haon't, and I doesn't want to."

Finding that he was only wasting time, Captain Harding rode on to the house, where he found the inmates hurrying about in the wildest confusion.

Mr. Moreley quickly acquainted him with the facts, so far as known, of the disappearance of Meta and Ella.

Harding was surprised at the mention of Meta, for he had incidentally learned something of Paul's history; but that was neither time nor place for conjecture; so, after a moment's thought, in which he determined to follow after the lost girls—he believed that Captain Vinton had been captured by the same party—he asked to be shown where they were last seen.

"I can not tell you that," said Mr. Moreley, "but I think Prince will put you on the track."

"Take me to him at once."

Moreley led the way to the dog's kennel. "A bloodhound!" exclaimed Harding, in surprise. "I thought it was a man."

"Prince is better than any man for this business," said Moreley. "Be ready for a start and I will loose him."

The moment Prince was free, he gave a glad bound, and almost instantly struck the scent.

"Forward!" cried Captain Harding, excitedly; and the troop pressed on.

When Prince reached the spot where George Matthews and his party surrounded the girls, he was puzzled for a moment by the great number of tracks; but Captain Harding saw the trail plainly and kept on. They soon came into the road, where they saw that a halt had taken place. Captain Harding found the spot where Henry fell from the horse, and picked something bright from the dust. It was Henry's ring.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "I fear we are too late. Forward with all haste!"

They pressed on again, and found the camping-ground. With scarcely a halt, they resumed the pursuit.

Just after noon, as they rode to the crest of a hill, they saw, in a little ravine just below them, the party they were searching for.

"At them, boys!" shouted Captain Harding; and down the hill they dashed. The surprise was complete, and the struggle brief.

"But where is Meta?" cried Ella.

"And George Matthews?" spoke Henry. Sure enough, they were gone.

"What will Colonel Rodney say?" exclaimed Captain Harding. "Henry, we must find her! We will ride over to the village and find a place for Miss Martin to remain, and then we'll scour the country."

"Yes, yes," said Henry, almost as much interested as though it were Ella.

But where was Prince?

#### CHAPTER XXIV. THE TEMPTRESS AT WORK.

DORA MARTIN stood at the door of the library in a listening attitude. She had just passed through the hall, but the sound of horses' hoofs on the hard road had attracted her attention.

After waiting a moment, she hastened to the door and looked out. A horseman was coming up the avenue, and when he saw Dora, he urged the horse to a quicker pace, and was soon at her side.

"Well?" said she, coldly, yet trembling with eagerness to hear what private Allan Wentworth had to tell her.

"Hank Vinton will trouble you no more," he whispered, scarcely above his breath.

"Come away from the house," said Dora, taking him by the arm.

"Now, how do you know?"

"I saw him fall," said he.

Dora clapped her hand to her heart, for with the knowledge of Henry Vinton's death, she realized what it was to sacrifice love for ambition.

"How? When?" she asked, after a pause, during which the man was bending looks of the deepest admiration upon her.

"In battle," he replied, choosing to keep his own part in the affair a secret.

"Two days ago?"

"Are you sure?" she asked.

"I know it," he replied. And he thought he did.

"Then you had no hand in it?" Wentworth smiled.

"What does it matter?"

"Nothing in particular," said she, carelessly, "only that it does not put me in your debt."

"You are already beholden to me," he replied. "I ask no stronger hold upon you."

"What do you mean by that?" she asked, betraying no agitation.

"Nothing in particular," he replied, imitating her careless words and manner, "only I thought we had been in partnership so long, that we might continue so."

Dora did not start nor change color, although she well knew what was coming, but her active brain never worked so busily as it did then, searching for some way out of this difficulty.

"Speak plainly, Mr. Wentworth," she said, frigidly.

"I thought I spoke plainly enough," said he, reproachfully. "You know I have loved you from the first moment that we met at school; you know that I have left home and friends for you, and steeped myself in crime at your bidding; and you know that you have given me hope that some day you would be my wife. I ask it now."

Dora gave him one of her sweetest smiles. She saw her way clear for the present.

"That can not be, Allan. Did you never guess why I wanted my sister and Henry Vinton out of the way?"

"I never cared, only that I pleased you," he said, recklessly. "Now I want to know why this can not be?"

"I am a wife already, Allan."

He started back, and the agony of his look almost made her pity him.

"Whose?" he demanded, hoarsely.

"Norman Vinton's."

He groaned in anguish, and staggered toward his horse. She followed him.

"Allan."

He turned his face to hers, for the voice was very low and sweet.

"If at any time within a year my husband should die—"

"Back!" you accursed temptress!" he thundered, "or I shall forget that you are not of my sex. Leave me!"

He vaulted into the saddle, and dashed away, the most reckless being that God's sun shone upon that day.

Dora gazed after him in fear and surprise. It was so unlike him.

"Faugh! he'll only kill himself, perhaps, and that will be the end of him."

She turned and went into the house.

She had only spoken the wish of her heart, when she spoke that falsehood to Allan Wentworth. It was strange, knowing her as well as he did, that he should believe her; yet it was not impossible. Ever since she became convinced that Henry Vinton was beyond her reach, she had cherished a hope that she might have better success with the father, weak, suffering, almost crazy though he was. He was not less sane than she with all her blooming health, but she was the more cunning. She already had a power over him that he could not resist, and she was only waiting to satisfy herself that she could hope no more from Henry. She heard of his death, and the time had come.

After the singular interview with Allan Wentworth, she went to the library. Norman Vinton was sitting by the window, looking out upon the autumn landscape. He looked up with a pleased smile when Dora made her appearance.

"You have been gone a long time, Dora. I get so lonesome."

"But a little while," said she, with a loving caress, "yet it seemed so long to me. How do you feel this morning?"

"No better," said he, sadly. "My days are numbered. The doctor tells me that I am not long for this world. How lonely I! There is not one to mourn for me."

"You forget me," said Dora.

"Do you, then, care for such a wreck, my child?"

"You have been very good to me," said she, with the same look of love that had won Henry Vinton from Ella's side.

He saw it, and understood it. Nothing that she could have done would have given him such a realizing sense of his entire failure to achieve the happiness, the power, the fame, which had been his aim. A miserable failure.

"Why not?" he thought, as he sat gazing at Dora. "I have not long to live, and she will always be near to comfort me until the dreaded end. I will! I will!"

It was a great triumph to the scheming woman, but she felt insecure, until man's edict made them man and wife.

Norman Vinton cared not how soon, so Dora commenced preparations at once.

It was to be a quiet affair. Mr. Vinton was too weak for excitement, and Dora, half-ashamed of the invalid bridegroom, desired no display until after the wedding.

So the priest was brought from the neighboring town, and with only the Arrancourt household to witness it, the ceremony commenced.

But Dora's triumph was not yet.

The work was but half done, when Norman Vinton gave a shriek of terror, and sunk senseless to the floor at the very feet of his bride.

Full well the disappointed woman knew the cause of this sudden fright, and turning her eyes toward the door, she beheld the

shadowy terror which had so long cursed Norman Vinton.

The other inmates of the room followed her example, and when they saw the dreaded phantom, they cowered in the corner of the room until the specter vanished.

Dora sprang to the door and bolted it. Then, with unspoken curses, she set about the resuscitation of Norman Vinton.

#### CHAPTER XXV. LIGHT!

ELLA waited anxiously for the return of Captain Harding's party, but a week passed and no tidings.

She was sitting one day by the window of the little cottage, thinking of Henry and Meta, as indeed she had been ever since they left her, when she was startled by a bugle-call, and looking up the street, she saw a body of cavalry entering the village.

At the head of the battalion rode a tall, noble-looking officer, sitting on his horse with the utmost ease and grace, but neither turning his head to the right or left. He halted his men beneath the trees of a grove just opposite the cottage, and within fifteen minutes, a little city of tents sprung up like magic.

"Colonel Rodney wants to know if we can get water here for supper?"

A soldier, with a bucket on each arm, had approached the window where Ella was sitting, and asked this question.

"Colonel Paul Rodney?" she asked, quickly.

"Yes, marm; the best officer in the army."

Ella forgot about the water, and the man asked again.

"Oh, I will see."

She ran back into the kitchen.

"I may as well say yes," said the woman, in reply to Ella's question about the water. "They will have it anyhow. See there!"

Sure enough, the old well-sweep was creaking up and down, and the soldier was filling his pails.

Ella went out to him.

"You can have the water."

"Yes, thank you," said the soldier, with a merry twinkle in his eye. "I knew I could, so I thought I would be drawing it to save time."

He seemed, however, to be in no hurry, for he was unnecessarily slow. He loved to look at the bright, pretty face. Perhaps it reminded him of some dear one at home.

"Do you think Colonel Rodney will come over here if I send for him?" asked Ella, as he took up his buckets and moved off.

"Certainly, marm. I'll tell him when I go back. Shall I give him your name?"

"He does not know me," said Ella; "but, for fear he may not want to come, tell him that I have seen Captain Vinton."

"Captain Vinton? You have? He is my captain. Is he alive and well?"

"Yes; he was a week ago."

"Bully! I'll have the colonel over here in a jiffy."

The soldier hurried back with the glad tidings, regardless of the slopping water which half-emptied his buckets. He spoke to a comrade here and there, and presently there arose three rousing cheers from the whole regiment. Ella felt a pardonable pride at this homely tribute to Captain Vinton's worth, and wished that he could be there himself to see it.

Colonel Rodney had looked on approvingly, and when the demonstration was over, he hastened to Ella.

"You have seen Captain Vinton?" said the colonel, kindly. "Pardon my eagerness, but we have been very anxious about him."

"Nay, colonel, I like your eagerness," said Ella, warmly.

"Then you must class Captain Vinton among your friends," said the colonel.

"The very dearest friend I have," said Ella, frankly.

"Then you are Ella Martin, of whom I have heard him speak so often?" said Paul, rising, his face beaming with pleasure.

"Yes, sir," said Ella, with a pretty color stealing over her face.

"I need not tell you how pleased I am to meet one who is so dear to Henry Vinton, and I know that you left him well, by the happiness I see in your face."

"Yes, colonel, although I am somewhat anxious now. But I must tell you the whole story."

She related the whole in a few words as possible, reserving the names of George Matthews and Meta for the last.

When she told of the dastardly conduct of Matthews, the colonel fairly shook with indignation.

"The miscreant!" he exclaimed. "I know him well. But, you speak of a companion; where is she now?"

"Captain Vinton and Captain Harding are in quest of her now. George Matthews slipped away during the fight, and took Meta with him."

"Meta!" cried the colonel, starting from his chair. Then his face assumed a cold, stern expression that was very painful to Ella.

She went over to him and placed her hand upon his arm.

"You knew her once, Colonel Rodney?"

"Yes, once," he said, bitterly.

Then Ella thought of the strange words which Matthews had used. She shrank from the task, but it was Meta that she was battling for.

"Colonel Rodney, have you seen George Matthews since you left Willhampton?"

"Not once."

"Did he ever say any thing to you about Meta?"

"Never."

"Then it was a base falsehood!" cried Ella, stamping her little foot upon the floor.

"Oh, the wretch!"

Colonel Rodney looked his surprise.

"I can not tell you now," said Ella, assuming a playful manner. "But you must not look so black when I speak of Meta. She is a dear girl, and spoke often of you."

Paul's manner softened a little.

"I almost knew you by her description of you."

"Ah!"

"She has many a time expressed a wish to see you again. Would you like to see her?"

This direct charge was so entirely unexpected, that he hardly knew how to answer; but, after a moment's thought, he resolved to reply frankly.

"Ella, it has been the dearest thought of my life that I might meet Meta again."

"She is waiting for you," said Ella, with a glad smile.

A joyous light broke over Colonel Rodney's face at these words, and he pressed the dear girl's hand so warmly.

"How much I thank you, Ella. She has told you something of my life, and you know that I could not tell her how dear she was to me, until I felt worthy of her. Then came that awful blow that sent me away dishonored. I lost all hope then for awhile, but I will yet clear my name of the foul suspicion."

"She knows that you are not guilty," said Ella, determined to bring these two together.

"The world must know it, too," he replied. "But tell me of Meta. Why she left Willhampton, and how the time has passed since."

Ella readily complied, and Paul thought he would never tire of listening. Of course she knew nothing of Doctor James Martin's revenge. That was Meta's secret. Might it not yet keep these two apart.

"I could listen all day," said Colonel Rodney, as he arose to go; "but I must not waste time. Meta is in peril, perhaps, and I must hasten to the rescue."

At daylight the next morning, the battalion was ready to move, and Ella, who was up betimes, watched them gallop out of sight, going to the rescue!

#### Bowie and his Knife.

BY RALPH RINGWOOD.

THERE are probably very few men who have not seen and perhaps handled that terrible weapon known as the "Bowie-knife," a broad, heavy blade of equal width for about two-thirds its length, and then cut sharply away from the back and tapering thence to a point! A fearful instrument in the hands of a determined man, and one with which many a desperate deed has been done. But there may not be so many who know how and why the blade came into existence.

Many years ago, when steamboating on the Western waters was, as compared with the present day, in its infancy, a large side-wheel steamer backed out from her wharf at Louisville and turned her prow southward on her long journey to New Orleans.

The boat was crowded to its utmost capacity with a heterogeneous mass of human beings, some seeking health or pleasure, while others were traveling southward on matters of business and profit.

To those who are at all familiar with steamboating on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, it will not seem strange when I say that the gambling fraternity were strongly represented, for in those days, and indeed even now, no first-class steamer ever left her moorings without having on board more or less of these human sharks whose object was to prey upon their fellow passengers, and on the present occasion they began to show their hands the moment supper was over and the cabin cleared.

Among the passengers was a slightly-built, rather handsome and well-dressed gentleman, apparently in the prime of life, quick in motion, and evidently possessing unusual activity and strength. This could be seen in wide, deep chest, muscular, flexible limbs, and waist as small as that of a lady. Altogether he was one who, in a crowd, would exact more than a passing glance. He seemed to be well known to the officers of the boat, and was, at the time we first noticed him, standing at the office, leisurely using his toothpick, while talking with the captain, at the same time letting his large and remarkably piercing gray eyes rove over the surging, restless mass in the cabin beyond.

In the meanwhile the gamblers had gotten well to work. A roulette table near the center, a "sweat-cloth" further down, while one or two tables near the social hall, or forward part of the cabin, were surrounded by parties engaged at the comparatively harmless game of eucher.

For several hours the different games progressed quietly, and by the time the hands of the clock over the office-door pointed to the hour of twelve, the crowd had very considerably thinned out, leaving only a little group surrounding the players at the different tables.

At one of these, especially, the one nearest the office, the interest of the lookers-on seemed to be aroused to the highest pitch. Although these had nothing whatever to do with the game that was progressing, were probably strangers to all engaged, yet with pale faces and open mouths, plainly laboring under the most intense excitement, they gathered closer and closer around the principals, and, with bated breath, waited the issue of the play.

"Stakes are high yonder, I guess, colonel," said the captain, touching the gentleman whom we have described on the shoulder, and pointing to the table. He had just come down from the upper deck, and for the first time noticed the appearance of things.

"It looks so; let us see what is going on," replied the colonel, rising from his chair; and the two approached the table around which the group were clustered.

It took but a glance to see that the stakes were high, very high, and it required but a second glance to discover that one of the four players was the victim of the other three. In plainer words, three gamblers, and confederates at that, were engaged in fleeing the fourth individual, a young man of prepossessing appearance, evidently a man of wealth and refinement, but a mere child in the hands of his skillful and unscrupulous opponents. Large sums of money, gold, silver, bank-notes and checks, were rapidly staked and as rapidly lost. It mattered not how good the hand held by the young man, some one of the others were sure to have one just a shade better, and so it had been going on for hours.

But the planter, for such he was, was game to the last. His face was deadly pale, his eyes bloodshot and his lips compressed as though in suffering, but his hand did not tremble, neither did he hesitate to push forward the heavy stakes, only to see them melt away before his gaze.

No man, unless absolutely made of money, could stand such a drain upon his purse very long. And so it happened that at the third deal after the captain and his friend, the colonel, had approached, the young planter threw upon the table a large roll of bills, saying as he did so:

"That is the last. I own not another dollar on earth. Cover it."

"How much?" asked one of the gamblers, a tall, sallow, black-whiskered fellow, who had villain and cut-throat written upon every lineament of his face.

"Ten thousand dollars. Cover it, and let the deal go on," was the reply, in a voice husky with excitement.

The money was at once covered, the cards dealt, the draws made, and—the ten thousand dollars followed the way of all the rest. Four kings were beaten by four aces held by the dark gambler.

For an instant the young man sat staring blankly at the table. His face worked spasmodically, and his breath came and went with painful gasps. His strained eyes, with a singularly-startled expression, were suddenly lifted, and instantly became fixed with a stony stare upon some object in the lower part of the cabin.

The others followed his glance, and beheld the face of a woman, wonderfully beautiful, but pale as death itself, and upon it a look of such intense suffering that even the gambler himself uttered a slight exclamation of pity. It was looking out from a state-room, the door of which was held half-open.

The words, "I am a ruined man," from the lips of the young planter were echoed by a wild shriek of anguish, and the beautiful vision suddenly vanished.

It was the young bride of the ruined gambler, and they were returning to their Southern home after the honeymoon spent amid the mountains of the North.

All night she had watched him from that half-opened door, hoping against hope, and now when the dreadful reality burst upon her she became happily oblivious, and was found a moment after lying extended upon the floor of the state-room.

"Well, what has all this to do with the invention of the Bowie-knife?" some impatient reader will ask. One moment, and we will see.

"Will you continue your play?" asked a low, stern voice, as the gambler arose from the table flushed with victory.

The tall man wheeled round sharply and encountered the keen gray eye of the colonel.

"Not to-night, sir. We have had enough!" was the bland reply, uttered with a singular smile upon his face.

"Enough, eh? Do you mean enough of minding?" was the cutting question that followed.

"D—tion, sir! What do you mean?" exclaimed the tall gambler, savagely, springing around the table and fronting the colonel.

"I mean exactly what I say, sir," coolly replied the latter. "You and your confederates here have swindled, stolen, do you hear? Stolen that money from yonder young man, and by the Eternal you shall play, and with me. This or I will have you landed on an island with alligators for your companions," and he looked at the captain of the vessel, who nodded his head significantly.

For an instant the gambler was speechless with anger. He fairly foamed at the mouth, while his glittering white teeth snapped like those of an infuriated animal.

"Who the h— are you?" he hissed.

"It matters not who I am, Ned Hartman; I know you, and that is enough."



Come, sir, take your seat! or would you prefer the island?" replied the colonel, in the same low voice he had previously spoken in.

There was evidently something in the challenger's manner that cowed the ruffian. He was afraid of the man, and showed it despite his efforts to the contrary.

"Yes, we will play," he suddenly said, while a look of deadly menace overspread his face. "You shall have your fill of it, and after that I have a demand to make."

"I think I understand you," was the calm reply, "and rest assured, I'll not disappoint you."

And the two men sat down to play.

It was now two o'clock in the morning, and nearly all the passengers had retired, but by some unaccountable means it got noised about the boat that something unusual was happening in the cabin, and before long men began to emerge from their state-rooms and gather, half-dressed, about the center of attraction. In half an hour the game began, the upper portion of the cabin was again crowded.

Not a word was spoken save by the players themselves, and they spoke only when the necessities of the game required it.

At first the colonel lost. The stakes were not as yet very heavy, and perhaps he was taking his opponent's measure. But as time passed, and the bets grew larger, it was observable that he won much more frequently.

He never for a moment lost the perfect equanimity that was one of his characteristics, while upon the other hand the gambler began to lose his temper, at times indulging in a savage oath as the stakes were swept away.

Hour after hour passed, and still that silent, expectant crowd hovered around the players.

The colonel had gotten steadily to work; the tide of fortune was all in his favor, and at every "call" he gathered in the gambler's ill-gotten gold.

The betting was enormous. Fabulous sums were staked to the center, for the gambler, seeking to turn the tide in his favor, had adopted the plan of "doubling" at each bet. It would not do, however, and just as the faint tinge along the eastern horizon announced the opening of a new day, Ned Hartman threw down the cards.

His bank was broken; he had not a dollar left, and so declared as he arose from the table with a face white with passion and his evil eye full of deadly hatred.

"You have won to-night," he hissed through his clinched teeth, as he leaned across the table toward his opponent. "But there is another game. Can you play as well at that?" and he threw back the breast of his coat, and touched the butt of a pistol.

"Better, perhaps," coolly replied the colonel. "Let's go on top," and he turned upon his heel to seek the hurricane roof. "Stop, gentlemen," exclaimed the captain. "I can not permit this on my boat. I will land you on an island, and await the result."

"That is better, captain," said the colonel, with a light laugh. "It will save the trouble of carrying the fellow's worthless carcass ashore. When will you land?"

"There is a suitable spot some fifty or sixty miles below here. We will reach it in a couple of hours," was the reply; and the party at once broke up to discuss the probable result of the duel.

"A word with you, captain," said the colonel a few minutes later, as he came out of his state-room, holding a small package in his hand.

The two entered the office, closing the door behind.

"In this parcel," said the gentleman, "is the sum of money I won from that villain Hartman. I wish you to ascertain how much the young planter lost, and return it to him. You need not say whence it came, and he therefore can not decline accepting it."

"It is a noble action, my friend, and I will gladly do what you wish," warmly replied the bluff old boatman. "But how about this fight with yonder fellow? What weapons will you use?"

"The knife. You know my skill in its use. My only trouble is that I have no blade that just suits me. Will you lend me your smith for an hour or two?"

"Why yes, certainly; but what on earth do you want with the blacksmith?" asked the officer, in surprise.

"I will tell you by and by," laughed the other. "Please give me an order on him, *carte blanche*."

This was done, and the colonel disappeared below and was soon in close consultation with the steamer's smith. He held in his hand a piece of pine board that had evidently been whittled into a pattern. Indeed his parting injunction to the artisan told as much.

"Use the heaviest file you have, Mr. Wheelock, and confine yourself as closely as possible to this pattern. A sharp edge and keen point will do the rest."

"In two hours, sir, you shall have it," promptly answered the man; and the colonel, apparently well satisfied, ascended the stairs, and entered his berth, to catch an hour's sleep.

The heavy bell of the steamer announced a landing, and those on the lookout saw that they were approaching a low, densely-wooded island that lay nearly in the center of the stream, and consequently considered as "neutral ground."

This was to be the scene of the conflict. As the gang-plank shot out and found a secure lodgment on the bank, the impatient crowd rushed ashore.

A moment later, Ned Hartman, the gambler, closely attended by his confederates, descended the stairway and left the boat. One of the party carried under his arm a small, handsomely-bound mahogany case.

Next came the colonel, accompanied by the steamer's first officer, and then the remainder of those, who, faint-hearted at first, finally gave way to a desire to witness the bloody scene, and so followed.

A short distance from the water's edge a small opening in the heavy timber, free from undergrowth, and carpeted with short, crisp grass, was found.

This was selected as the battle-ground, and preparations were at once made for the terrible conflict that was to ensue.

Around the edges of the clearing were grouped the lookers-on, leaving a clear space, some ten or fifteen feet in diameter, in which stood the combatants and their respective seconds.

The one, a tall, broad-shouldered, muscular man, of enormous strength, his face black with hate and desire for revenge, clearly showing that no mercy might be expected should the chances of the combat place the other in his power.

His opponent we have already described; but, now, beside his gigantic enemy, the small, wiry frame looked fearfully out of proportion.

Many shook their heads ominously, while others openly asserted that the fight was unfair. Sympathy was evidently all on the side of the apparently weaker party.

Suddenly the colonel spoke. "Gentlemen," he said, "I, as the challenged party, have the right of choice of weapons. This man seeks my life because I have won his money. Well, he may have it—if he can take it."

A wild hurrah was the answer.

"By virtue of my right," continued the speaker, "I have chosen this as my weapon." And hastily unrolling a paper that he had in his hand, he held up in the bright rays of the morning sun a broad, bright blade, with a buck-horn handle.

It was a terrible-looking weapon, and well might the eye of the gambler quail as his opponent flashed it before him.

This it was that had engaged the smith so busily at his anvil all the morning, shaping and tempering it to match the pine-wood pattern.

For an instant Ned Hartman demurred, but the murmur of voices on every hand told how dangerous it would be for him to back down now.

No, he must fight it out, and with the weapon chosen by the party who held the right.

The preliminaries were now hastily arranged. The men were to advance within five feet of each other, and at the word were to attack as each thought best.

Stripped to the waist, the combatants took their positions, each holding in his right hand the deadly blade.

"One word!" suddenly exclaimed Hartman. "Who are you? I would know the name of the man I kill."

"My name, eh? Well, you *shall* know it," replied the other, still smiling. "I am known as *Jim Bowie*, and—"

"H—I and fury!" abruptly exclaimed the startled gambler, instinctively drawing back a pace.

"Don't like it, I see. Well, Ned Hartman, you'll like it still less ere long. Come, sir, take your position." And Bowie grasped his weapon firmly, and strode forward to the mark.

The gambler had evidently received an unexpected blow. He was unnerved, but still he came up, and the two stood eying each other and waiting for the word.

"Gentlemen, are you ready?" rung out the clear voice of the captain.

"Ready!" promptly answered the combatants.

"Go!" shouted the officer, and every heart in that large crowd gave a painful throb.

The movements of the panther are not more stealthy or more wary than were those of Colonel Bowie as he glided upon his enemy.

The gambler had not moved: he was evidently awaiting the attack. Round and round him Bowie glided. Now making a feint, now a lunge, and then away with quickness of thought, only to return and go over the same ground again.

Those who knew the man did not doubt the result, and it was astonishing to see the easy smile that sat upon the face of the old captain. He knew who would sleep under the shade of those tall cotton-woods.

The tactics of Bowie were now beginning to have their effect upon Hartman. He was getting impatient, was fast losing his temper. This was what the other desired.

Suddenly Bowie was seen to leap forward—a tremendous bound—the knife flashed with a sickening glare, a sharp cry of pain, and again the active man was beyond reach. But the blade was no longer bright, while across the bosom of the gambler lay a deep, red gash, where the knife had plowed its way.

It was a ghastly wound, but not fatal; and only served to arouse the sleeping demon of passion in the wounded man's breast.

With a yell of mingled pain and rage, he dashed at his wary adversary, cutting and slashing on every side.

Bowie stood firm until the other was almost upon him, and then, as the gambler made his stroke, he leaped lightly on one side and delivered his return.

A deep, heavy thud followed the blow, as the broad, keen blade cut its way through muscle, cartilage, and even bone, to the very hill.

Without a groan Ned Hartman fell, his heart clove in two.

Such is the origin of the *Bowie-knife*. Under a sudden "inspiration," as Bowie always declared, he shaped the pine shingle by which, out of a heavy file, the steamer's smith made the knife with which he slew Ned Hartman.

The writer has seen that blade many's the time, and can vouch for the truth of the above story.

## Cruiser Crusoe: OR, LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFOREST.

NUMBER TWENTY-EIGHT.

My mad race with the infuriated bull had brought me to a spot between the bay where lay the broken canoe of the Indian girl and another small harbor, for which I at once made.

As I already suspected, it was there where I had myself landed. I had come back to the place whence I had started, after skirting a great portion of the island and crossing another. I was always, when on high land, within sight of the burning mountain.

My canoe lay perfectly safe about a quarter of a mile from where I stood, and my dog was close at hand, engaged in an occupation of a most singular kind, but which I could clearly make out by means of my telescope.

There was a very shallow part of the bay about twenty feet from my canoe, and when I first looked, Tiger was lying down, as flat as he could make himself, watching. Suddenly he leaped up, dashed into the water, and seemed to be driving something before him toward the shore.

Tiger was fishing.

Then I saw him come out of the water with a good-sized salmon, or such like fish, in his mouth, which he there and then incontinently devoured. My first act, on making this discovery, was to turn away once more. My intention was to perform a journey round the island in my boat in the hope that I might find Plabina and her friends encamped on some pleasant spot on the coast, or somehow trace the mode of her departure. But it was necessary to fetch my gun and my lasso, which took so much time that I was again compelled to pass a night on shore.

At daybreak, however, I descended the rocks, and rejoined my faithful Tiger, who was delighted to get a drink of fresh water, that which he had discovered being so brackish as to be very unpalatable to any one not suffering from extreme thirst.

The canoe was then impelled out of the bay, the sail set, and, with a wet sheet and a flowing sea, we started on our journey. First, my intention was to visit the spot where the bull had fallen the day before, as some of his flesh would be found exceedingly welcome and useful. As I expected, the place was easily found, a whole herd of vultures being collected round the spot. These disgusting animals, before they go in for a gorge, sit awhile at some distance from the body to make sure that it is dead.

Aware of this peculiarity, I made for the shore with great rapidity and some dexterity, beached my canoe on the soft and pearly strand, and advanced toward the carcass just as the gory-beaked vultures, fresh from some carnage at no great distance, settled one by one round the bull. My dog flew toward them, but dared not venture within reach of their talons or mouths. I was compelled, therefore, to fire at them with my two barrels, which, killing one, sent the others lazily flying away to the neighboring rocks and boulders.

My long sharp knife was now brought into requisition, and in a few minutes the skin was cut away so as to admit of the first morsels being cut out, including the tongue. I was not so experienced a butcher but that it took me an hour to do the whole satisfactorily. The choice bits were then strung together, and carried to the boat.

It was high and dry. The tide had ebbed, and left her safe on the sands.

This was a very serious matter, but there was no help for it but to wait until the tide flowed again. In the mean time, by way of occupying myself, I determined, if possible, to make a fire, which was not difficult, as a number of stunted palms and bushes grew behind a row of heavy boulders. Dragging these up out of the arid soil, a huge blaze was soon made, and then, when the flame subsided, a goodly meal of buffalo-steaks, far more than was immediately required, was cooked, and partly eaten by my dog and myself.

The rest was placed on board the boat; it having been nearly high tide when we landed, we had to wait until it was nearly night before, by great exertions, I could get the boat afloat again. During the heat of the day I had slept, so that I preferred starting, even though night was coming on.

The sea was tolerably smooth, and the wind steady, though with a tendency to head me in my course, which compelled me to run out a good distance from the shore, in order to get a good offing. As I was close upon a wind, and not running before it, with a fair breeze steering was comparatively easy, so that I jammed the tiller to starboard, and amused myself with smoking and gazing out at the wild and fantastic scene.

The moon shot like a glittering pathway across the waters that made its rays dance and tremble as the waves rippled and fell; while I could never lose sight of the dark column of smoke that rose everlastingly from the summit of the volcanic hill.

Suddenly I started. Something—I knew not what—had shot across the silvery pathway beneath the moon. Eagerly I clutched my telescope, and then saw at once that a canoe, manned by two natives, was paddling toward me with a caution and circumspection that seemed somewhat inimical. But being well armed, I could not fear two naked savages; so immediately going about, steered direct for them.

With equal rapidity they turned and fled. The swiftness with which they used their paddles was miraculous.

They were making for the shore at an angle which, steering as I now was on the contrary tack to what I had been, would bring us close together long before the line of white waves, marking a sunken rock or coral reef, were reached. Still they piled their oars with intense earnestness, and though they lost ground, were not deterred from the most violent exertions.

Soon they were not fifty feet from me, and I was wondering what I should do with my capture, when, with a wave of their paddles, they appeared to strike. But I was mistaken. The perigua was twisted round, and ere I could make out their intention, they were paddling directly in the wind's eye, in which direction I, of course, could not follow them.

Still, it was not my intention to give up the chase; but going about once more, I trimmed my sail, and keeping close to the wind, followed relentlessly in their track. As they must end by being fatigued, and as keeping in the wind's eye would drive them out to sea, my chase must surely end in being a successful one.

My motives for perseverance were of a mixed character. I had caught but a very faint glimpse of the two paddlers, but it appeared to me that the one in the bow of the boat was Plabina. I had but seen the moon's rays fall once on her face, and yet I could not be mistaken; at least, so I thought, which made me strain every nerve in order to reach them.

For some time the canoe did not seem to gain on them at all, especially as to keep any way on their track, I had to run up in the wind's eye every now and then, which naturally put me back in my course. But just as we appeared to be getting out of sight of land, they altered their course, and made with increased rapidity for the island.

Round and after them with all speed, which, now being well-used to manage my canoe, was very great. It was evident that the fugitives had been watching my movements with a keenness of observation quite wonderful, for they now took a course a little off the parallel, so that we should avoid meeting. As they were to windward of me they could run down upon me when they liked, but I could not make one inch more to eastward than I did, to save my life.

But what were these untutored children of nature about to do? In front of them was a raging sea that threatened to submerge them. Out half a mile into the sea were huge boulders, against which the waves dashed with incessant fury, while in the channels between, the waves ran twenty and thirty feet high, breaking in white foam and spray.

But sitting firmly in their tiny bark, the bold mariners made ready.

I, too, looked about me, and saw to the west an expanse of smooth water, by means of which I might turn the reef and catch the perigua ere they could reach the shore. Up went my helm, and away almost square before the breeze I dashed, glided with magic speed through the smooth water; down with my helm again, and aft with the sheet, until I was round a corner and behind the boulders, and in still, smooth water.

But where is the canoe?

Gone. No, yonder I can see something. It is the canoe. But they have been too quick for me. They are within a very few yards of the beach—they run their boat aground, they lift it up, and disappear in the woods; at all events, so it appeared.

What was to be done? To think of pursuing two natives, even with a dog and gun, at night was out of the question. They would outstrip me without the slightest difficulty, while even they might lead me into some treacherous ambushade. For you must know, I was not sure of one of them being Plabina; only fancied so; and more than that hoped so.

My best course under the circumstances, was to anchor on that reef-protected shore, which I did in an original sort of way. Seeking out the first rock above water, and selecting one that was honeycombed by the waves, I fastened my lasso thereto, and made all secure for the night.

Then, though anxious and nervous with thinking of her who was always upper-

most in my mind, I lay me down, and went soon off into a sound slumber. When I awoke it was some time past sunrise.

I could make nothing of the shore, which was wrapped in one of the most singular mirages I ever saw. Objects a hundred yards off were utterly without any definition. A crow, a stone, or a bit of black wood, looked as lofty as the trunk of a tree; pelicans were exaggerated to the size of ships with all studding-sails set, and the whole ground was wavy and seething, as though seen through the draught of a furnace. It was a most singular illusion, and did not last long.

When the strange mist rose, I pushed for the shore, which was very arid and covered by dried-up pools, near which grew bushes not unlike fennel, but not less than eight to twelve feet high. There were also prickly gourds; the nara, with long runners, covered numerous sand-hills; while high shifting sand dunes, or denses, as they call them at Yarmouth, completed the scene.

The sun was hot, and yet, having secured my canoe as well as I could by means of my lasso, I hurried, with great anxiety and intense haste, to the spot where I had seen the perigua run ashore.

But the perigua was gone.

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## THE CHALLENGE.

BY "GYAS."

I challenged her one lovely day,  
She so merry and so happy,  
She so blithe and so pretty,  
To combat in croquet.

A smile played on her lips so gay,  
Oh, how I rue that cheery game!  
That led her on the path of Fame,  
When she vanquished in croquet.

That winsome, blue-eyed, rosy fay,  
Amid the clover pink and white,  
Under piercing sunbeams bright,  
Beat me in croquet!

## The Miner's Daughter.

## A WESTERN MYSTERY.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

READER, fancy a young girl with a faultless form; blue eyes, long, golden tresses, and clad in a white dress, whose short sleeves showed a pearly arm bared to the elbow, and the picture of Venice Harmon is before you.

She sat gracefully upon her white horse before her ruined father's cabin, in the midst of the gold region of Colorado. Myriads of stars looked down upon her from a cloudless sky, and the cool night breeze sported wantonly among her hair.

Her father stood beside the horse, and he held one of her hands in his.

"Venice," he said, "do not remain away long to-night. I have worked hard to-day, and I want you to sing to me before I go to sleep."

"I shall not be gone a great while, father," replied the young girl, stroking Abdel Kader's mane with her little rawhide riding-whip. "I shall go no further than the Hawk's Nest, and I shall return within the hour. Of course I will sing to you when I come back. I guess how you feel after toiling the live-long day for gold—for the yellow ore to take us back to our once happy Kentucky home, and give it back to us to live in and be happy again. Oh! father, I do wish you could strike a great bed of gold and take it out by shovelfuls. Then we'd go back to Kentucky and be somebody again. We were somebody once, father, you know."

"Yes, darling Venice," said Jasper Harmon, and he clinched his hands. "We were respected so long as we had gold and were rich. But, Mark! Clara's shrewish, outward manners pleased me, and as my partner, as you know, he ruined me and made me a bankrupt. But, daughter, the time is coming when we will go back to the old home with gold. If the good Lord spares me my constitution a while longer, all will be well. I am quietly making my money, but I begin to feel my health being undermined."

"You never told me this before, father," cried Venice, ceasing to stroke her horse, and looking alarmed.

"No, but never mind," answered her father. "Do not let it trouble you. I may strike a vein in a day or two. Now go to Hawk's Nest and think of something to sing to me when you return."

"Good-by, then, father," she tried to say gayly. "I'll be back soon."

She touched Abdel Kader's flank with the whip, and he darted forward, as she waved a parting salute to her only parent.

"I told her but one-half," he muttered, gazing after his only child in the semi-darkness. "I have not the heart to tell her more. Too much toil has summoned a disease which is sapping my constitution, and soon, if I persist in my present pursuit, I will be a mere wreck of my former self. It is for her that I toil, not for myself. When I left Kentucky I expected to accumulate wealth in this region in a short time, but I was deceived. I have accumulated perhaps six hundred dollars, and if I do not strike a vein pretty soon—I shudder at the sequel."

A cold tremor crept to the miner's heart, and he entered the cabin to throw himself, with a groan, upon his hard couch.

Dear did Jasper Harmon love the only child God had ever given him—for she was the image of a wife who had, years before his day of trouble, soared aloft to join the chorus of angels. He toiled day after day for the treasures in the womb of earth, that he could return to the States and blot from his name the odium that many attached to it. Is it a disgrace to be an honorable bankrupt? No.

The story of his afflictions can be told in one brief line. He trusted a fellow-man and was deceived. How many have followed his example! Enemies slandered him, and he knew that all-potent gold was needed to restore his name, and just then the news of gold in Colorado electrified the United States.

Thither, with a company of emigrants, he went, and in the region of gold we have found him and his daughter Venice.

And now, since the story of ruin has been told, let us leave Jasper Harmon on his couch, and follow his daughter.

Hawk's Nest, the destination of the young girl, was quite an elevated spot of rocky ground, a mile distant from her father's cabin. It commanded a view of the wild and exceedingly picturesque country in that far Western region, and at night the view was doubly grand. Huge peaks loomed their majestic heads against the star-lit domes, and far beyond them the fires of emigrants could be discerned. At the foot of the "Nest" a mountain-stream rushed along, and dashed over rocks bathed in the soft light of the stars.

It was no wonder that Venice Harmon loved this spot, for Abdel Kader could easily ascend to it and stand with ease.

After leaving her father, the young girl cantered briskly down the mountain road, deeply occupied with her thoughts.

Presently the noble white horse shied to the right, and the reins were jerked from her hand. The next moment the horse had darted into an unfrequented path, and the now frightened girl tried in vain to check his speed.

She shouted his oriental name, but her voice seemed to have lost its power, and he dashed on wilder than ever.

"He will stop somewhere," murmured Venice, relinquishing her efforts to bring the frightened steed to a halt. "I will remain in the saddle, come weal or woe."

It was wonderful to see how the horse kept the path in the dim light of the few stars that shone upon it; and Venice felt that she was gradually descending seemingly into the bowels of the earth.

On, on, down, down, till the precipices towered hundreds of feet above her.

At last she reached a gulch—the rocky bed of a once large, swift mountain river—and to her utter astonishment Abdel Kader suddenly halted before a hut!

Venice could not repress a shriek at the sudden and unexpected appearance of the structure in that lonely spot, and she tried to turn the horse's head in the direction from which they had come.

Vain were her efforts, and at last she dismounted, hoping to accomplish at the bit what she could not at the rein.

Her feet had scarcely touched the rocks when the animal darted from her, and disappeared like a flash among the white boulders far down the bed of the river. A groan burst from the young girl's lips, and she buried her face in her hands. The horror of her situation nearly froze her warm heart, and the blood in her veins seemed to have been turned to ice.

She knew that she could not return to her father during the night without assistance, and she shuddered when she imagined that fond parent's feelings at her prolonged absence. Where would he look for her? He knew naught of the existence of the gloomy gulch, and then, would he ever find her? Never! The cold winds seemed to shriek, as they swept down the ravine.

But, as she saw that she was doomed to pass the night in that lonely spot, she resolved to try and make herself comfortable. Therefore, she crossed the threshold of the hut, to find a fire dying out in a very small room.

"What!" she cried, gazing upon the flickering blaze. "Has this lone hut a tenant? Who dwells here, where once a river rushed? and are they now within?"

But not a voice replied, and the stillness of death brooded over all.

The dying fire lit up the rough interior of the apartment with a weird light, and enabled the miner's daughter to discern a stool covered with a thick mold.

Venice determined to seat herself upon the stool, and await the return of the builder or builders of the fire, who, to all appearances, had but temporarily left the hut.

She carried her determination into action, and with the uncharred portions of the stick kindled the fire anew. As the flames shot upward she discovered a closed door at one side of the apartment, which seemed to bar the entrance to another room. Almost simultaneously with this discovery, Venice's gaze fell upon a tin can, which had, many day or other, been used for a lamp. Picking



THE MINER'S DAUGHTER.

it up she shook it, and found that it contained a small quantity of oil.

"If I had a wick," she murmured, "I would explore this hut. Perhaps some mystery sleeps in yonder room; it is so silent."

The want of a wick furnished one in the shape of a portion of her skirt, and, after lighting it she began her voyage of discovery.

Stepping across the apartment whose somberness was still further relieved by the rude lamp, she touched the door. A gentle push sent it back on its wooden hinges, and, holding the light before her, she stepped into the room.

What a horrible, ghastly sight greeted her eyes!

The room was occupied—but by a fleshless, grinning skeleton! It lay full length upon the ground, the bony right hand resting upon what looked like a leather bag. Near its head was an overturned stool, and in one corner of the tomb above ground lay a pick and shovel against a huge boulder.

A rather had started from the ceiling, and hung like the sword of Damocles over the skeleton and its mining implements.

The miner's daughter took in all these particulars at a glance; but she did not shrink and drop the lamp.

She had expected to meet a fearful sight in the closed room, and she was not disappointed.

Driving back the feeling of fear that tried to steal a march upon her, the brave girl stepped forward, hoping to find a clue to the person whose bones lay before her. A minute later she picked up the leather bag, but the seams parted, and many a lump of gold fell at her feet!

She uttered a cry of amazement, and the yellow ore continued to issue from the rent. Then, looking around, she discovered what had until then escaped her notice—lumps of gold were strewn all over the floor!

She could scarcely command herself. Oh, if the metal was in her father's possession, they could return to Kentucky and live happily once more.

As the thought entered her mind, a noise in the first room attracted her attention, and reentering it she confronted a tall, half-naked Indian! Visions of gold vanished, as the dew disappears before the sun, and Venice uttered a shriek of terror.

The savage was as much surprised as herself, for he dropped the dressed racoon he held in his hands, and started back with a guttural exclamation.

He soon recovered his equilibrium, and was the first to speak.

"How came white face here?" he asked.

In a few sentences Venice related the story of the runaway, and learned, in return, that the savage only intended to occupy the hut during that night. She found that he knew naught about the gold, and she did not see fit to acquaint him with her discovery.

The red-man knew the path leading from the gulch, and assured Venice that her father's cabin was but a short distance from them. He offered to guide her home, and, not without some fears, she intrusted herself to his care. He had no intention of betraying her, for he was friendly to the miners, and in a short time Venice found herself on her father's knees relating her strange adventures.

An hour after her return home Abdel Kader dashed up to the door, poked his head beyond the threshold, and whinnied when his eyes fell upon his mistress.

The next day Venice and her father went to the hut, and collected the lumps of shining ore; and buried the bones of the poor miner.

They discovered no clue to his identity, and to this day it remains an unsolved mystery of the Great West. But a time is coming when all things will be made plain, and the mystery of the hut in the gulch will be solved to the satisfaction of millions.

Venice Harmon and her father left Colorado a short time after the scenes related above, and the gold, providentially sent, enabled them to live as they once had lived, and drove back the disease that was sapping the miner's life.

They are happy now, and Venice is soon to be a bride!

## Camp-Fire Yarns.

## Aunt Nancy and the Shawnee Chief.

"Barnie the old rifle out here, Ned," said uncle Eben Kincheole, who was sitting on the front porch smoking his after-dinner pipe.

I reached the battered and war-worn gun from the brackets upon which it was suspended over the fire-place, and handling it as tenderly as possible, for it looked and felt as though it would fall to pieces on the slightest provocation, I went out to where the old man sat in his arm-chair.

"I saw it was getting late, and that hurried me, and I didn't, for a wonder, take time to reload, but at once made for the game and soon had it swinging high up out of reach of any prowling varmint. I cut off a good bit for supper and breakfast, intending to return next morning with the horse and bring the remainder, and picking up my gun, started homeward."

"Luck seemed to have changed all of a sudden, for I hadn't gone a hundred yards, before I flushed a big gobbler that went off right in the direction of the cabin."

"I now remembered the gun wasn't loaded, and so I put down a heavy charge of turkey-shot, and started off after the fresh game."

"Until about twenty years ago there stood, on that little rise just 'tother side of the spring-house, you can see it from here, a tall chestnut oak, dead at the top, but with heavy branches lower down."

"Well, the gobbler had lit in this tree, and I caught sight of him two hundred yards off. Dropping the meat, I began stalking the bird, and finally getting what I thought a good range, was on the point of touching the trigger, when crack went a rifle from alongside the oak on which the turkey was sitting, and away went my fur cap with a bullet-hole through the crown."

"I just had time to catch sight of the Indian, for it was an Indian, as he dodged behind the trunk to reload, and seeing there was no time to lose, I took to a tree myself and waited for what was to turn up."

"I knew my load of shot would never hurt the villain at that distance, at least enough to disable him, and I didn't dare discharge the gun to reload with a ball, for fear he would charge before I could do so. A thought struck me! I would put a bullet down on top of the shot, and risk it that way."

"I tell you, lad, I felt a sinking when I put my hand into the pouch, and found I hadn't a single ball there. I had either lost them out, or more probably, come off without any."

"I was in a fix, and I knew it. Just then the Indian caught sight of my head, outside of my cover, and I barely dodged in time. He didn't shoot, however, but I knew he was on the watch to do so, and I dared not look round the trunk to see what he was after."

"Night was coming on rapidly, and I knew Nancy must be in a terrible way. She must have heard the rifle-shot, and

## NIGHT.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

The sun, that warmed us up all day,  
To the far west has fled—  
Bathes in the wide Pacific sea,  
And, night-capped, goes to bed.

The cricket, with a tuning-fork,  
Pitches his latest song;  
The bullfrog, with a thunderous bass,  
Follows it loud and long.

The notes of the mud-turtle dove  
From that sick-a-more coast resound;  
The chickens roost upon the now,  
The rooster on the mound.

And quietly the twilight steals—  
It should be found and fled;  
The maid sits with a ball of yarn,  
Taking the evening wind.

The stars come out and out a shine—  
The moon she blows her horn;  
Sweet peace is in the quiet sky—  
The mice are in the corn.

The dew it settles like a man,  
Yea like a man comes down;  
And far away the mountain peaks  
A mist-wig on his crown.

The flower folds its light leaves up,  
And heedeth Nature's warning;  
The toper drinks his doze cup  
With, "Won't go home till morning."

## Beat Time's Notes.

WHILE it is so hot everybody is trying to keep cool with varied success, but some of the Massachusetts boot manufacturers manage to keep Coolies.

The spider is a weaver by trade—a regular web-shir—and is very handy at taking in a fly. Their webs are extremely fine, and resemble airy lace. I have been in houses where looking-glasses, pictures and transoms were covered with them. The women of the houses allowing them to remain to lead people into the belief that they were imported lace. The effect was very pleasant, and I commend the practice.

Snakes are considerably longer than they are short, and are the most pliant animals that ever walked the earth. They are historical, and thereby resemble the snakes of the dead-head kind in theatrical pits. Some people can charm them, and wear them around their necks and in their bosoms. I have known some fellows to wear them in their boots, by way of a change, but I wouldn't advise you to follow the fashion.

Eels are brothers-in-law to snakes, and preserve much of the family likeness. They are considered great delicacies, but I should be very delicate myself about eating them. They commence at one end and eat up, but I think I should stop short off. They make a slim meal at any time unless they are stuffed.

The roach, abstractly considered, hasn't many peculiarities to talk about, but when you are taking a nap on the floor and feel them running over your face, then they command forcible English. They live on what suits them, and are found in boarding-house biscuit.

This muskrat is quite a fish in its instincts, and follows the water for a livelihood. They are very useful in undermining embankments and are the cause of many a bank being broken. They furnish pure musk, which was once thought to be procured from the musk-deer of Asia, but that false idea has long been exploded. Their hides are good for ten cents. They are very fond of muskmelons, and are regular musk-eaters.

Crows are very handy, being always on hand in case you plant more corn than you want, and also when you don't. Farmers manifest double-barrel's full of reverence for them, and set up imitations of the latest Saratoga styles in the corn-fields to scare them off. They are not blood relations to crow-bars.

The Giraffe is a "nick or nothing" sort of an animal, and generally carries a pretty high head. He would find it inconvenient to wear a hat, and it would take a considerable paper collar to encircle his throat in case he tried to affect the styles. His "throat is like the swan," I'll swan.

To love cats is a sign that you will be an old maid. If one fails but it don't detract any thing from this assertion.

Forty-four cats in your back-yard at night will either make a philosopher or a fool of you, and it is immaterial to you which you are at the time. They sleep all day and seem to be troubled with the nightmare all night. The wall back of my window is a regular cater-wall. They beat any thing for quarrelling, and keeps on about as good terms with each other as two families living in one house. They say they are good for rats, but I prefer the rats by several dollars.

Turkeys are good for Thanksgiving. I like to give thanks over them. They are also good for a dollar and a half. They show off a table so nice, they go off a table so nice. I think as far as eating them is concerned I am a regular turkey-gobbler, and I don't consider this assertion at all in-sultant to the Turkeys.

Poodle dogs are very good companions to young ladies of sentiment. Whenever I see a woman going down-street tied to a lop-eared lap-dog, I always put my hand in my pocket for a cent, but on second thought the cent rises in my estimation and I withhold it. I am not at all dog-matic.

Snails live in a house which is a mere shell of a concern, and are never known to be away from home. Husbands take notice. Their speed is a little short of lightning, and they run no risk of stamping their toe, falling down and injuring their nose. There are human snails we respect less.

The grocer who boiled the flies down to recover the molasses which they had eaten, strained his charity but didn't get even a grain of conscience.

People who have a hard time in keeping up their taxes have the consolation of knowing that the taxes are keeping up themselves.

Some men think they can out-blow Gabriel, but he will at last come down on them with a trump.

Johnson says he knows the stars are named Neptune, Venus, the Plades, and so forth, but he can't see how in thunder they could find it out.

A fine summer drink is simply a tumbler of pure water with ice in it, nothing else; you have the Cognac in another tumbler.

BEAT TIME.